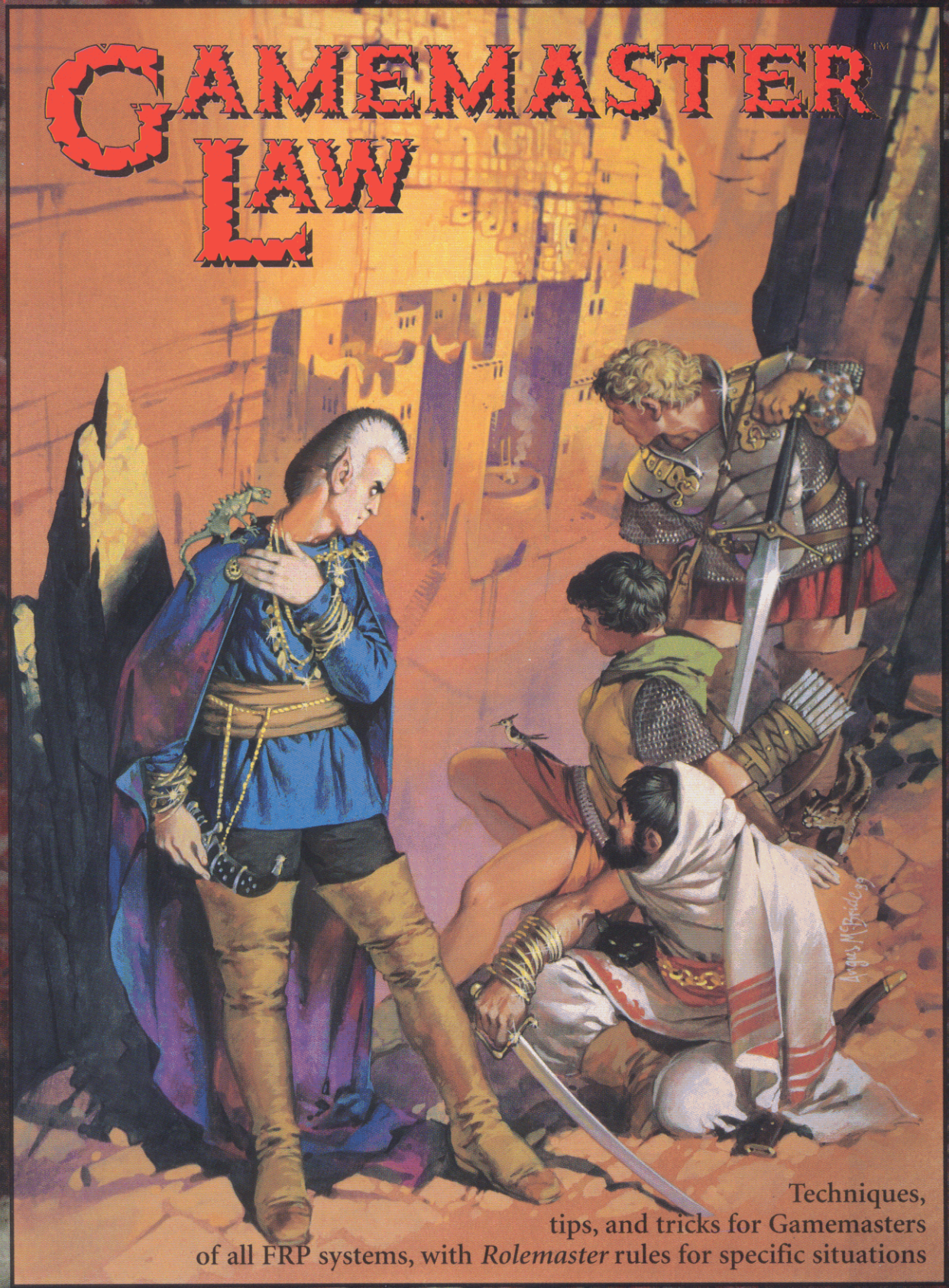
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ROLEMASTER™
THE STANDARD SYSTEM

GM Guidelines

I.C.E.®

GAMEMASTER™ LAW



Techniques,
tips, and tricks for Gamemasters
of all FRP systems, with *Rolemaster* rules for specific situations

GAMEMASTER LAW™

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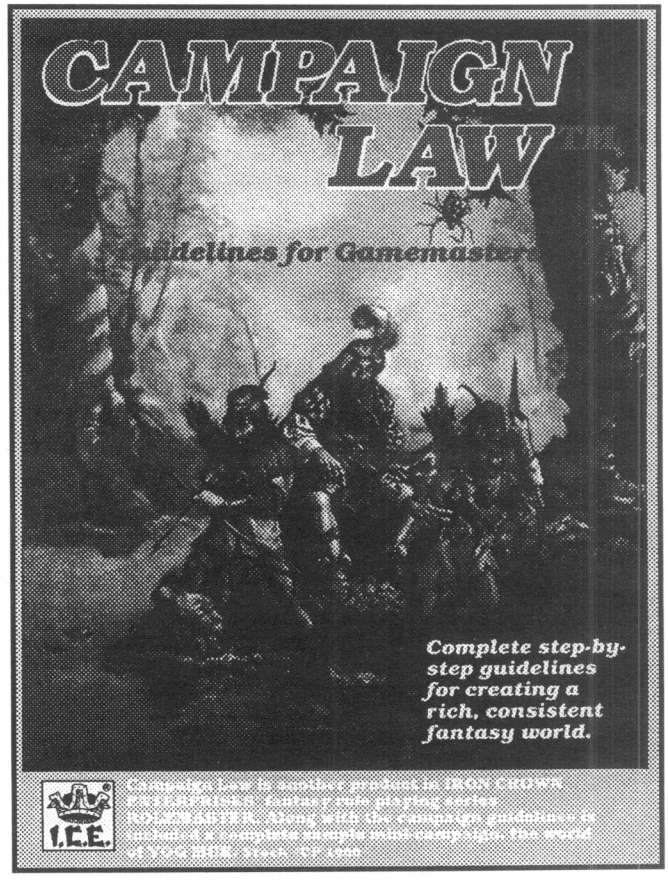
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Special Gamemaster Law Credits...

Deane "You mean we have to do cards?" Begiebing, Coleman "Three last names" Charlton, John "I'm almost done" Curtis, Don "Four first names" Dennis, Pete "Singapore" Fenlon, Kurt "Collation Party" Fischer, Jason "Change my name to Awkins" Hawkins, Olivia "Nyonya Cuisine" Johnston, Nick "Logo-man in Logo-land" Morawitz, Bruce "Yes. We have to do cards" Neidlinger, Jessica "A tad is smaller than a bit" Ney-Grimm, Dave "Can I borrow a Mox" Platnick, Mike "Table Master" Reynolds, Monica "You need it when?!" Wilson.

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WELCOME

Gamemaster Law is a book dedicated to the most indispensable person in any gaming group — the gamemaster. In this book, you will find a wealth of information about how to design, run, and maintain a fantasy role playing game.

GM Law is divided into two parts: **Intangibles**, where you will find discussion and advice about designing and running a game, as well as advice on the art of gamemastering; and **Tangibles**, where you will find specific mechanics, tips, and tricks for problems you may encounter in your games.

Although the material in *Gamemaster Law* is applicable to any gaming environment, it is designed as one of the four cornerstones of the **Rolemaster Standard System** (along with *Arms Law, Spell Law,* and the *Rolemaster Standard Rules*).

KEY FEATURES

Here is a list of some of the key features of *Gamemaster Law*.

- Discussion and analysis on how to choose the right game and style for you (as a GM).
- Guidelines for designing stories, NPCs, and backgrounds.
- Techniques for maintaining your game and keeping it under control.
- Styles and techniques of game presentation.
- Information and advice on special environments, such as tournament design and play and on-line gaming.
- Advice on how to mold ***Rolemaster*** into the system you need.
- Specific ***Rolemaster*** mechanics for handling diseases / poisons (including addictions), and economics / commerce / trading (including supply and demand).
- Some specific guidelines and notes on how to handle *Invisibility* and *Illusions* in ***Rolemaster***.
- Notes on how to convert from previous editions of ***Rolemaster***.
- Notes on specific campaign design (including designing the game world, climate and weather generation, culture and race discussions, and activities in the world).
- Specific tips and tricks that can be used in ***Rolemaster***.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Needless to say, any discussion of gaming techniques and styles is a discussion of opinions and personal viewpoints. Every GM has his own style and methods, and no book can hope to present all of the possibilities, much less claim to describe the "best" method. The rules and methods detailed in this book try to be as widely applicable as possible. While there will hopefully be several items of great utility to your game, you may disagree with some items, or simply find inappropriate to your game or style. When this is the case, simply do not use that item!

The **Intangibles** section is less a blueprint for running a game than it is a discussion of valuable techniques that are designed to bring to light aspects of your games that previously may have been unconsciously applied. While you may have seen the need to keep power levels under control, for instance, you may not have thought about the qualities of game metabolism and *why* elements do get out of control.

The **Tangibles** section presents rules for your game that may have been neglected in the past. As with any game system, if you have a method already in place that you prefer to the methods described here, do not change it! These rules are designed to fill out the holes in your games, not redefine your game. Use this material at your pleasure and convenience. And enjoy!

Note *For readability purposes, these rules use standard English grammar when referring to persons of uncertain gender: i.e., masculine pronouns. In such cases, these pronouns are blended to convey the meanings of she/he, his/her, etc.*

THE HISTORY OF GM LAW

This book has an complex history, not all of which could ever be portrayed. However, some of the history is interesting (if not entertaining).

When we first started formulating plans for the revision of ***Rolemaster***, the concept of a "Law" book for GMs came up. This book could talk about the intricate art of gamemastering without getting into system mechanics. Within a few days, we received a call from someone, who wanted to write a book on gamemastering techniques. Bingo.

A first draft of a manuscript came in and we decided to restructure the book to accommodate some specific ***Rolemaster*** concepts. We sent the manuscript back for a rewrite, with the idea that we would write at least some portion of the book "in-house." This delayed the initial release of the book (originally scheduled as the first book of the new system) until after *Arms Law*.

After *Arms Law*, we had to dive head first into *Spell Law*. Leaving little time for the work on *GM Law*. So the *GM Law* was pushed until after *Spell Law*. After *Spell Law*, we began development on the *Standard Rules*. We also were trying to wrap up *GM Law* (part time). However, the more we developed on the *Standard Rules*, the more we realized how many specific mechanics we needed in *GM Law*. So we decided to wait on *GM Law* until after the *Standard Rules* came out.

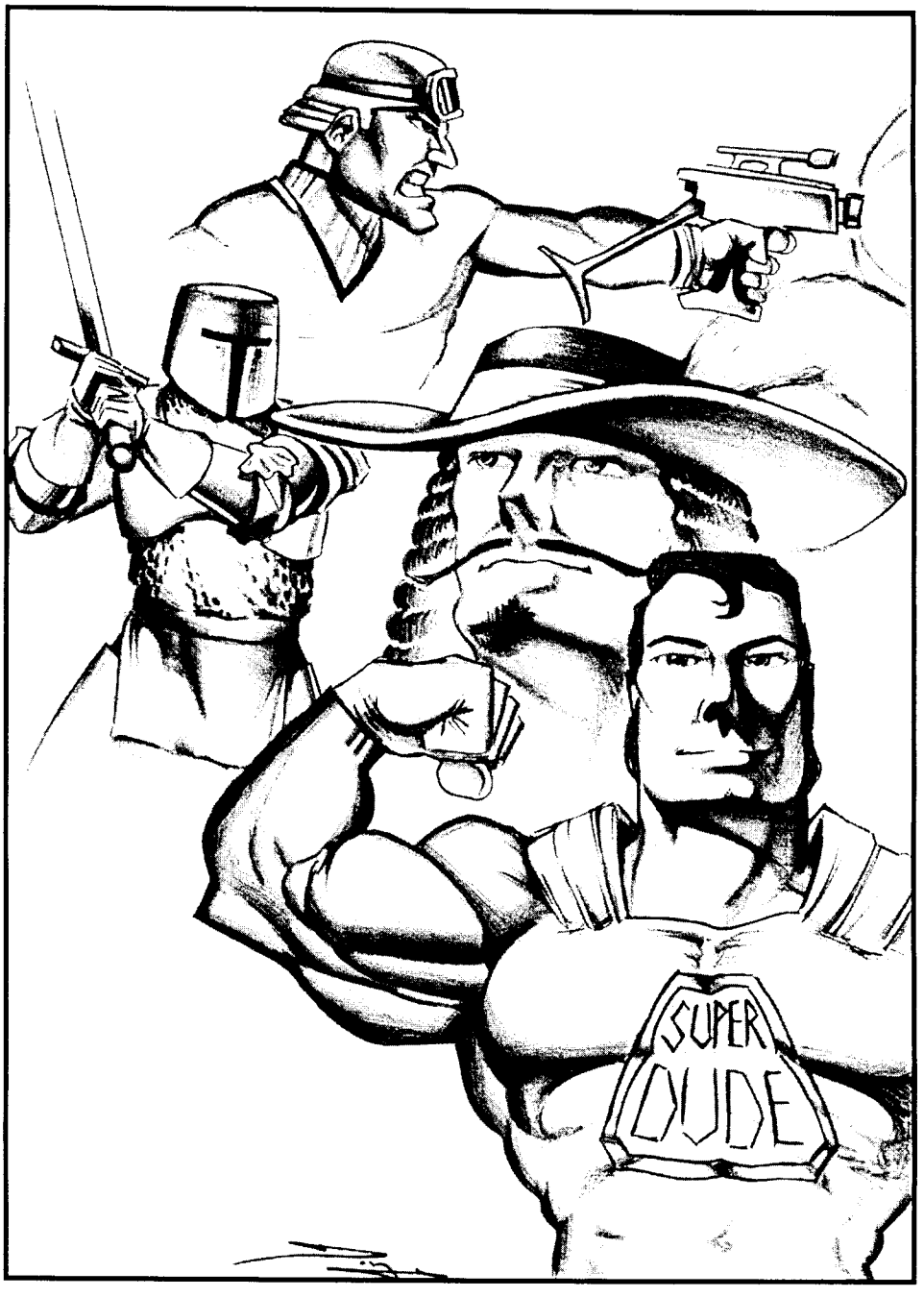
In the end, *GM Law* is everything we wanted it to be, and then some. Inside are some of the best bits of GMing advice we have been able to collect from some of the best GMs we could find!

DESIGNER NOTES: JOHN

When I was first introduced to role playing games in 1979, I played exactly one session and I knew exactly what I wanted: to be the gamemaster! I set out on a quest to learn what would make me the best GM. More than 15 years later, I am still discovering ways to improve on my skills. I have learned that GMing is constantly improving art form. With this book, I hope that I can guide beginning GMs away from the traps I learned about the hard way. But the veteran GMs will still find things in this book that they had never considered before (I know that I learned far more than I thought I would from writing this book).

I would like to thank my wife, who I first fell in love with through one of my NPCs (Padraic and Ellesian forever). I would also like to thank my mother for supporting my gaming habit for many years (and for being understanding). I would also like to thank all my gaming groups over the years. They have been extremely patient with me and my tinkering. Thanks guys for putting up with me and my constant state of change ("...things do change...").

In particular, some of my players I would like to deliver special thanks to are: Larry Adams, Ricky Knight, Richard Rives, Susie Curtis, Janis Mason, Carolyn Raynor, Gene Templeton, Jim and Delanie Andrews, Jay Bryan, Clayton Cundiff, Malcolm Cundiff, Drew Davis, Marty Sessums, Bobby Stubbeman, Dawn Warner, Chris Baldwin, Ralph Butner, Paul Ford, Adam Reid, Tracy Shurtleff, and Stuart Templeton.



DESIGNER NOTES: JASON

My GM style strongly advocates an aggressive approach to the presentation of the story. I try to make sure things are moving along and everyone has something to do or think about. When I originally proposed this product, there was "my way" and all the others. I wanted to write about the techniques that had made me very successful. Although I still want to write that kind of textbook, I have since been educated to the fact that every GM's style must be based upon his personality. I think we have found a good mix of material. *GM Law* has something for all GMs. So, *Charge to Victory*!

This product would not have been possible without many people. I would first like to thank my parents, Harvey and Sharon. They were my gamemasters in the "Growing Up" game. Thanks to my sister, Jamie, for all the adventures we have had together. To all my grandparents back home in Kentucky, who told me so many stories of older times (my unending devotion). I love and miss you all.

I will now mention some of the gamers that helped construct my best campaigns: Scott Harley, Scott Ramsey, Robert Bickett, Steve Harris, Jim Fallin, Brian Early, Scott Anderson (and his Louisville gamers), Chris Grimaldi, Matt Huddy, Steve Smith, Frank Greenwell, Chris Keys, Mike Grantland, Steve Tingle, Russ Evans, Barry and Sherri McGuffin, Steve Hoelkum, David Hardesty, David Burkette, Mike and Cherish Troutman, John Burden, Darrel Hughes, Brad Brown, Shawn Moore, Brooks Gibson, Thomas Owens, Steve Johnson and Rob Dresher. To the hundreds more that have shared the game with me, thanks for the theatrical fuel.

GLOSSARY

Actual Scope—The level of intrigue and machination going on in the background of a story, seen only by the GM except for rare glimpses by the players. *See also* **Scope, Visible Scope**

Austerity—The degree to which a game holds a character liable or accountable for his actions. If the danger of death is present, for instance, the character is in a more realistic and austere environment. *See also* **Heroic, Realistic**

Campaign—The setting or backdrop against which stories are placed. Referred to as a milieu, world, setting, etc. see also **Story**

Creative Resources—An arbitrary term used to indicate the quantity of detail and minutiae that a GM can simultaneously create and coordinate. Preperation beforehand can help to free creative resources for the session by lessening the need for improvisation of small details and leaving more attention free for the coordination of scene events.

Epic—A level of scale; the types of goals and motivations felt by the characters. An Epic scale game sees characters dealing with grand events, such as political maneuverings, the fate of nations or even worlds. *see also* **Scale, Prosaic**

Epiphany—The final grand climax of a story, in which the major storylines are tied together and the players get to glimpse the actual scope of the story events. *see also* **Scope, Revelation**

Flag of Disbelief—Details in the story or presentation of the story that cause the players to fall out of character or distract from the believability of the story.

Focus—The level of detail in which the PCs operate; i.e., whether details such as daily travel events, minor conversations and even calls of nature are played out or whether they are glossed over in the interest of moving the story forward.

Game—A combination of story, setting, players and a GM in a related series of role playing events.

Game Format—Whether a game is Closed (open only to the players who began the campaign or the rare late entrant) or Open (in which a player can easily be introduced into the group at any time).

Gamemaster—The creator and primary controller of a group of players in a game session. Referred to as **GM**.

Game Style—Whether a game is Thematic (with a clear overall story that drives nearly every session) or Free-form (in which the characters move about the setting at will with small stories inserted by the GM for them to explore.

GM Style—Whether a GM is Active (proactively moving the story forward through control techniques and manipulation of the setting) or Passive (letting the players move the story at their own pace, interfering minimally with the pace and then only through subtle techniques).

Heroic—A degree of austerity; characters are rarely killed, and great deeds are attempted with aplomb. The game is very forgiving to the character in the interests of maintaining the story.

Macroscopic Focus—A level of focus; details are larger and more far-reaching; characters focus on the consequences of actions and causes and effects, rather than the moment-by-moment resolution of such activities. Example: the player simply states the intent to travel, and the GM jumps ahead to the end of the journey, rather than making the PC go over every event on the journey. *see also* **Focus, Microscopic Focus**

Masking—The practice of inserting details into the scene and story to prevent the significant details from standing out, and therefore being obvious when subtlety is desired.

Metabolism—A measure of the power level of the game and the degree of control the GM is able to exert over the story and PCs.

Microscopic Focus—A level of focus; details are finer and narrower; characters must deal with such minutiae as equipment maintenance, the sand-blown grit in their eyes or even calls of nature in character. *see also* **Focus, Macroscopic Focus**

Microstory—A sub-story within the main story that serves either to bridge a gap between major story elements or resolve a side issue of some kind.

Mood—The "feel" of a game, such as somber, or comedic.

Pacing—The level of energy and the rate at which the story progresses. An action-oriented game will typically have a faster pace.

Preparation—Time and effort spent before a session developing story and setting material to be used in the game.

Presentation—The styles, techniques and manner in which story material is delivered.

Prosaic—A level of scale; the types of goals and motivations felt by the characters. A Prosaic scale game sees characters dealing with finding the next meal, surviving, or amassing personal wealth. *see also* **Scale, Epic**

Realistic—A degree of austerity; danger levels are high and the story is unforgiving. Characters may be killed and the story will move on regardless. *see also* **Austerity, Heroic**

Revelation—A smaller climax within the story used to reveal important story information and provide a dramatic interlude within the framework of the story.

Scale—The level at which characters are interacting and making decisions, such as deciding the fate of nations or scrounging for the next meal. *see also* **Prosaic, Epic**

Scene—A moment within a story in which characters perform, usually bounded by dramatic moments and a single location.

Scope—The level of intrigue or machination within a game. Characters see a certain level, and behind the scenes, the GM sees the larger picture, or scope, of the story. *see also* **Actual Scope, Visible Scope**

Session—A gaming event held for a period of time between players and a GM that describes a portion of a story.

Story—A set of circumstances, events and plots set against a setting (campaign) as developed by the GM and explored by the players. *see also* **Campaign**

Story Injection—An element introduced into a story for the purpose of illustrating a point, moving the story along, etc.

Story Leverage—Background information or gathered knowledge that gives a PC a valuable contribution to make during the story, thereby gathering story share. *see also* **Story Share**

Story Share—A character's (and therefore player's) level of participation in the story and focus of the session.

Structure—The framework of a story, determining the manner in which elements are introduced and when.

Subjective Perspective—A technique that a GM uses to provide a unique description of a scene to each player.

Visible Scope—The level of intrigue and machination going on in the foreground of a story, seen by the characters (and therefore players). *See also* **Scope, Visible Scope**

PART I
INTANGIBLES
PHILOSOPHIES OF ROLE PLAYING

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THE GROUP

This section addresses the core of any successful game: the group of players who are playing in it. There are several factors that should be examined when defining and making decisions concerning any given gaming group.

2.1 THE PLAYERS

2.1.1 PARTICIPATION

Movies and books may have great stories, but people do not get to participate in them while they watch or read. If you are telling a story well enough that everyone likes to just listen, maybe you should write a book! Participation is the primary strength of role playing. No matter what a player's motivations are for playing he should want to participate.

The levels of participation in a story vary from person to person. Most players want to be in various aspects of the story. Some people are content to follow the leader. Many just want to be with the group. Shy or reserved players may need more encouragement to get them to participate. A GM can control how much of the story a player gets to participate in. Providing the player with a good (and detailed) starting background is a good way to insure participation. GMs should provide little irresistible events that sweep the players up in the story.

Salting the players' information to require them to consult one another is a good participation technique. For example, unique items owned by one player's character that are important to the plot, prompt the other players to seek that player out and interact with him.

2.1.1 PERSONALITY

A GM must try to understand what type of people will be playing in his game. His knowledge of their personality is important to his success in story design and presentation. Be sensitive to the needs of players and avoid what they do not like. By avoiding what players truly dislike, you have already improved your story. For example, if a player does not handle failure well, then try to avoid making that player always fail in the story. If you are careful enough, you can allow him to fail, then later reveal that what he thought was a failure was actually a success (though perhaps not exactly what he was hoping for). This can be an effective story design technique.

When most people discuss personality they are referring to what they see a person do. This behavior is actually how a person responds to his environment. Why a person responds to his environment is also an element of his personality. Some people may behave the same way for different reasons. An aggressive person may have a need to succeed. Another aggressive person might desire his family's respect (and he believes success will provide this). A GM should make an attempt at understanding the motivations for a player's actions and not just how he acts.

Different people play in role playing games for different reasons. Some of the most common types of personalities can be grouped into something called a Player Zodiac. This Zodiac describes common aspects of player personalities. By identifying the Zodiac of your players, you can understand the type of game and sessions that they will enjoy most.

Usually, a player is a combination of two or three of the following Zodiacs (or something between two or three of them). Remember to be careful that you understand why a player is acting in a given way; do not assume you know a person just because you know how he will react in a given situation.

EAGLE

The Eagle is a charismatic player that has many good ideas. He is the perfect leader. Other players follow him almost without question. He wants to know what the other players think and has a special sense of what the GM is trying to convey in the story. His passion for the game is rarely matched.

HOUND

The Hound is a story fanatic. His curiosity for the story is foremost on his mind. He knows what to ask, how to ask, and whom to ask. With a hound in his game, the referee can be subtle with his story and expect that the players will not get confused. The hound can make a good leader. He will take everyone with him on the chase. The Hound will not give up the trail easily. When he is right he is very right. A hound never gets tired of the story.

BULL

This player is action bound. He would prefer to charge the obvious than wait for boring speculation. The bull puts great energy into playing the game. Unfortunately, he usually blunders all over the plot. But he also understands that he will miss things (and will expect to get a second crack at things). It is his dedication to action that makes him a good leader. A referee should find it easy to motivate the bull, but it may be impossible to predict him.

BEAR

The Bear is always right (at least in his own mind). He can hammer away at a story without getting tired. He is systematic about problem solving. The game can cause him a lot of stress, because he must succeed! Very often, he ignores all but the strongest council. However, his actions and ideas are driven by huge doses of common sense. A story is guaranteed to move forward with the bear as the leader, but many players will simply be passengers along for the ride. The Bear should try being a referee.

MAGPIE

The Magpie is always demanding the best. He wants the shiny stuff. He wants the referee's attention. He wants the NPCs to remember him. The bigger and shinier the story, the more satisfaction he gets. A Magpie will up the visible scope of the game every chance he gets (so be very careful about what you give him). The Magpie will always attempt to be the center of attention. If he is not given a major story share, he will become distracting to the other players.

FOX

The Fox is clever. He takes precautions that make it difficult to mislead him (and this can be a problem if you need the party to be misdirected). He is not initially aggressive, but can become tenacious if he deems it necessary. He is not always willing to take risks for other player's objectives (though he will often risk much for his own gain). For the Fox, there is no need to hurry into the story. He works well with the Eagle.





Hawk

The Hawk is aloof. He usually discerns great things (and deep hidden secrets) simply by listening and observing the game. The Hawk likes to know things and does not easily share his secrets. However, when he does decide to share, he will generally take over as a temporary leader and drive the story strongly. He will take advantage of what he has learned, accomplish the goal, and then back off. He gets along well with everyone, although he is usually annoyed with the Hound (who will always pester him for his knowledge).

Cat

The Cat is clever and curious, sometimes as much as the Hound and the Fox. If the Cat was not so easily unnerved by the story, he would be a good leader. The Cat tends to have good ideas but he is uncertain of their quality and fears failing. The Cat works best as a companion to the leader. He spends a lot of time worrying about the mistakes he has made (and those he might make). Despite his seeming distress, he loves the game.

Serpent

The Serpent loves mishaps. He lives to see others make mistakes and always thinks he could do better. He can be difficult to keep control over. However, if he respects the GM, he can provide a great mechanism for moving the plot along or directing the story. His plotting knows no end. He tends to provide a great deal of comedy to the game (especially when he fails). He will usually cooperate with the party, but his individual actions are hard to predict.

Rabbit

The Rabbit is a victim. Things always seem to happen to him. However, he is generally adept at dodging the worst effects from these events. He is the perfect target for side story information. He looks to other players for advice and direction. He reports all that he sees and hears. He can make an important part of the party. A Rabbit is best if he has an interesting background that the GM can retreat to for injecting information into the main story.

Turtle

The Turtle is slow, but steady. He has a great memory and can recount most (if not all) of the events of the story to date. He is also incredibly loyal to the game. As the game is played, a Turtle is content to watch the story unfold. He follows intently and will remember the smallest details. The party can often get important information from the Turtle (he is probably the only one who remembers exactly where the NPC was sitting in the tavern when they talked to him three months ago). However, the Turtle has less initiative than other players. He is often too overwhelmed by the story events to participate in a big role. Some novice players start as Turtles, and come out of their shells later (revealing their true nature).

Cow

The Cow is just marking time. The game might be interesting, but the Cow is not a role player. He will only actively participate if the referee makes a special effort to make him the center of attention. Most of the time, energy spent trying to bring the cow into the story will be wasted. He is usually at the game because of the social nature of the group, not to add anything to the story.

Vulture

The Vulture is that lost person that eventually makes everyone angry. His enthusiasm for the game is unmatched (except perhaps by the Eagle), but his conduct is horrible. His luck is terrible. He is moody and overreacts to everything. In general, the Vulture is more trouble than he is worth. The best GMs can direct the Vulture (usually with the help of an Eagle or a Bear) towards evolving into a different type of gamer. He could eventually become a great Eagle or Bear.

Sponge

The Sponge simply absorbs all you throw at him (and generally does not add anything back to the game). He will take the best character background and never mention it. He will see the most interesting things and not respond to them. He remembers very little of previous games. He is usually not in the game for the role playing.

Dragon

The Dragon is greedy and covets success and power. However, he also loves to watch others fail. At times, the Dragon is fearless; at other times, he is full of cowardice. But Dragons (like Bears) do not stop, ever. Unfortunately, the Dragon is not playing to see the story to its end; instead, he is playing to prove he is the best (or at least that everyone else is not as good as him). His love for the game is great, but the motivations for his love of the game are very selfish.

2.1.2 WHY ARE YOU HERE?

GMs are all different. The styles they use are a reflection of their personality, experience and knowledge. Before we examine the reasons the players play in your game, you need to understand why you are running the game. There are four aspects to the core of every GM: Socializing, Control, Creativity, and Entertainment. Every GM has some elements of all four. Each is discussed in detail below.

Socializing

By nature, a GM should be a social creature. All players get to socialize, the GM is going to be the center of attention most of the game session. A GM should never find himself sitting quietly in a corner working on a map or plot outline (at least, not while the players are gathered around to play).

The players probably will not let you. They have questions to ask and cases to plead. A non-social GM would be a very unusual thing. If you like to socialize (and be at the center of attention), being GM is not a bad idea. You are the only pesrson that must be part of every game session. However, these social reasons to play must be supported by other desires or the game will not be very fun for the players.

Being in Control

The ability to control what goes on around you is a fantasy all to itself for some people. As a GM you are in control. If you ever wanted everything done your way, this is one of the best ways to do it. Create a fantasy world where the people are polite. Create a world in which the months all have thirty days and you never lose track of what day it is. Time moves at the pace you desire. It does not rain if you do not want it to. If you want two countries to stop fighting over land, they do! If you want something good, uplifting, and remarkable to happen, all you must do is make it so. However, remember that how you control a game is every bit as important as why you enjoy controlling it.

In addition, you can impart feelings and emotions to other people. If you want to make someone feel good, you can reach them though their character. If you want to scare someone, you can provide the setting and events for it to occur.

Being in control of even a fantasy world is a satisfying feeling for most of us. If this is an important reason you are GMing, you must remember one thing. You are in control only as long as your players want to let you be. If you are unfair or abuse your privilege as the author and judge of your group's game, they will become your judge. Unhappy players will not play. Regardless of how enjoyable you think your game is, it will be measured by the players and their enjoyment of it. Without happy players participating in it, your game is just a daydream.

Creativity

A GM has the greatest responsibility of all the people in the game. Of course, this is balanced by the fact that this responsibility is so enjoyable. The act of creating a story is so enjoyable that it is a wonder that there are not more GMs than there are! If you're a GM, creating a world and filling it with many colorful stories should be one of the most enjoyable things for you do. All you create becomes important to your players. You can pour out your emotions and your perspectives during a session and you have people share your feelings.

A GM should love this part of the game. If a GM does not enjoy creating a good story, he will never be be able to draw that juiciest bit from a session! Even using prepared sources for stories will fail during execution if the GM is not ready to add in the little details of the story that can only occur during the game session. In addition, the players will know if a GM loves to create good stories. If a GM shows less creative interest, so will the players, and the game will suffer. Learn to love creating every little detail, even if most other people would think them trivial.

Entertainment

Entertainment is the final and most important reason for GMing. Having fun is the bottom line. Your story content and its presentation should be very enjoyable for you. However, you should remember that it is always easier to enjoy your own story than it will be for the players to enjoy it. A GM must learn to share the elements of the story, that are entertaining to himself, with the players. Knowing the secret plans of the dragon is entertaining. If players have no hint that something is going on they are not entertained by it. If you are energetic and excited about the story, you will infect the player with a similar enthusiasm.

A common mistake is to think your players are enjoying the game based on your own enjoyment of the game. Make sure that the players are constantly making progress to unfold the story. Never forget you are playing out the story to an audience that demands to participate and understand the story. You should not give up all your secrets, but rather you should make sure the players have obtained a number of interesting story elements to feel they know what is going on.

Sometimes, in the name of entertainmnet, you might, create additional pieces of information that are not so critical to the main plot, but provide the players with material that helps them "feel" that they know at least some things that are going on in the story. As GM you must look after your player's entertainment first.

2.1.3 WHY ARE THEY HERE?

Now that you understand why you are GMing, you should examine why your players are playing. Some players play for the same reasons that you are GMing (e.g., the social reasons, the creative reasons, to be in control, and/or just for the fun of it). But there are some other reasons for playing in games.

Escaping Reality

The human imagination is incredible. Anything that is real we can imagine. In fact, anything that is real can be imagined more fantastic than it is or more terrible than it ever could be. What do players want to happen to their characters? How do they want to feel? Many players of role playing games enjoy the ability to shut off the complexity and stress of real life. If you cannot afford a trip to Jamaica, then a trip to the "Snow Castle of Telecrest" will have to do. Fantasy role playing is the cheapest vacation you can take.

GMs should remember that players may be playing in the game to avoid the complexities of real life. With that in mind, it would be unwise to present their character with the same dilemas that they must face in real life everyday. For example, if one of your players is frustrated by his job because his boss is very demanding and unreasonable, you should not put that player's character in a position that he must answer to an NPC who is demanding and unreasonable. Instead, you should either avoid the issue entirely; or perhaps reverse the position and allow the player's character to be understanding and forgiving of those people below him.



Expressing Themselves

The ability to express themselves on a manageable scale is one of the biggest reasons people play in a game. Role playing games stimulate your desires and motivations. What makes role playing special is the stories are those that the players desire. They should reflect the motivations and goals of the people playing in them. Even if your plot is not as good as a movie or a book, your players will enjoy it far more because it reflects their own desires and they are a part of it.

With this in mind, players should be allowed flexibility of direction within the story and the ability to share in the creative process. Like a GM, but on a smaller scale, players enjoy being creative. Players create their own fantasy within the boundaries of the GM's story.

2.1.4 GROUP PROBLEMS

A GM must be ready to handle problems that arise in his game. For example, what happens if the players decide to surrender to the enemy rather than fight them? What happens if the players decide to take a trip to an undeveloped area of the game world? However, these questions all become meaningless if there are deeper problems in the game. A GM must understand how his group functions as a whole before these problems can be addressed.

The core of every gaming group can be analyzed by looking at four core elements: the personalities of the players in the group, the roles those players take in the game, the objectives or motivations those players have within the game, and the amount of time each of the players is around each other.

Personalities

The personalities of each of the players should be examined carefully. However, you must also understand how each player interacts with each other player. While two players individually may be easy-going and casual; if you put them together, they might have a clash of wills and the situation could be very volatile!

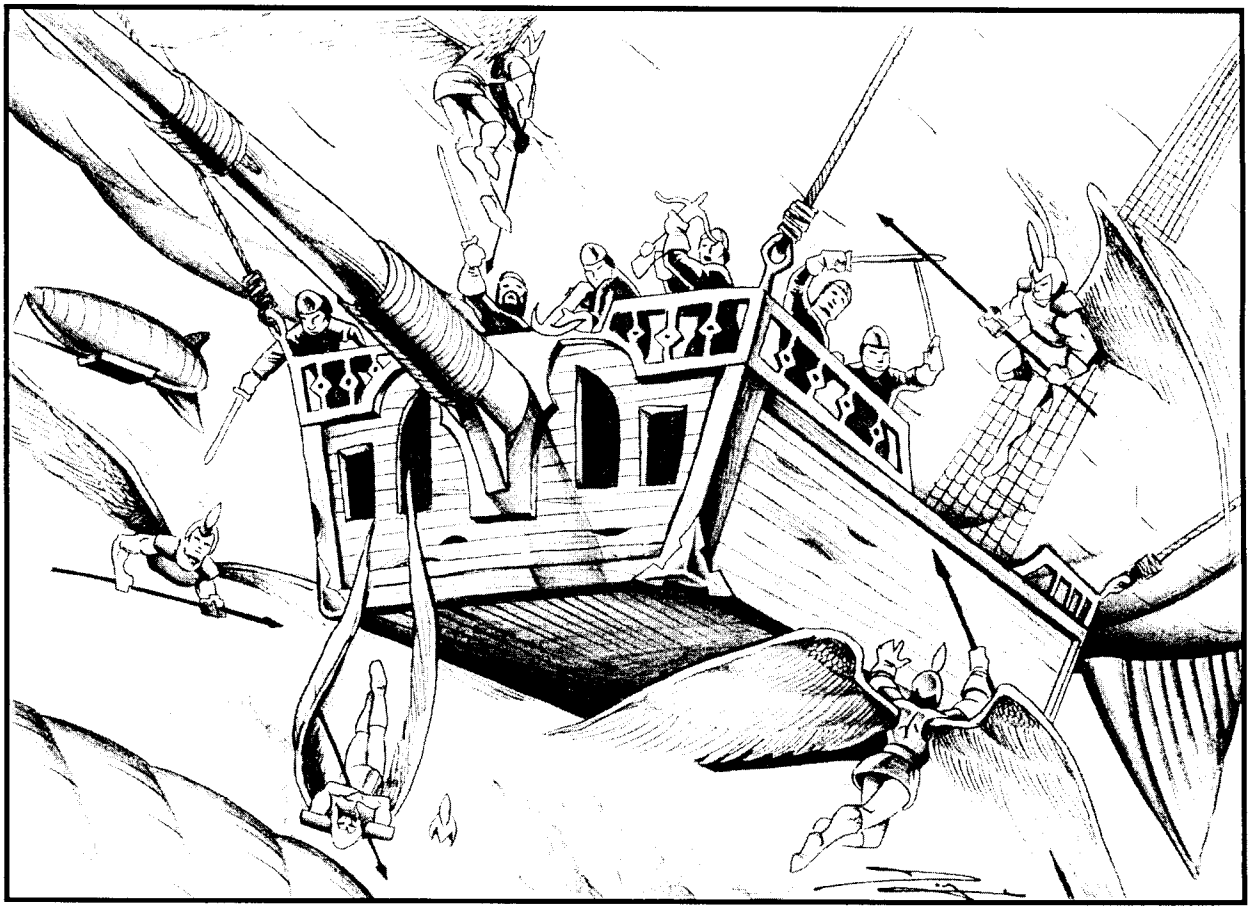
Usually problem personalities are easy to spot. For example, some players may be loud and outspoken. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, how do the other players feel about such a personality? If you get two player with this type of personality, you might have a personality conflict that could result in disasterous social implications.

Remember that the players must exist peacefully within a social setting before the game can be fun for anyone. If you have two players who are bitter enemies in real life, they should not try and sit together at the same table and play in your game!

Casting

Casting is when a player is assigned to take on a specific role within the group. There are basically four types of roles a player can play within the game: the leader, the second in command, the follower, and the dissident. Each of these is discussed below.

Leader: In general, there should only be one. If there is more than one leader, there will be confusion and chaos (though this might be the desired effect). The leader will make command decisions and provide the driving force for the group's direction in the game.



Second in Command: There might be many of these, but there is usually only one or two. The second in command is who should take charge if the leader is unable to. He might have specific expertise that is needed for specific situations (this is the primary reason that there might be more than one Second in Command in a group).

Follower: This is almost everyone else. Most people will be followers. This does not mean that they never act of their own accord. But they do not provide direction for the group or make decisions concerning the group.

Dissident: This kind of player is constantly questioning the authority of the leader. He may or may not have desires to be the leader, but he doesn't want to simply be a follower. In general, he is a good player, but doesn't take direction very well. If you have more than one or two dissidents, you are probably in lot of trouble. Try and convince them to play a different role within the group.

Objectives and Motivations

Players have reasons for role playing. These reasons determine what they want from a good role playing session. The point of role playing is to please the players (as well as yourself). If players do not enjoy your game nothing else will matter. You should read and understand the sections on personalities and reasons for role playing. This will provide you with great insight as to the objectives and motiviations your players have. In addition, you can use the Player Zodiac to help guide your decisions concerning objectives and motivations.

Time

The more time a group of players has around one another, the more they will understand about the motivations of objectives of the players. Note that this has nothing to do with the game! If you are around someone, you learn how they react to specific things.

If a GM understands how well the players know each other, he can communicate more effectively through the story. He can use subtle phrases and verbal implications and imagery that might be lost on a group of people who have no common frame of reference.

2.1.5 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

There are several aspects to examine when determining the number players to run in your group. These include: amount of time in an average gaming session, how much role playing experience each player has, how available and accessible new players are, and how close (socially) are each of the players are with each other.

Session Time

In general, the longer your sessions are, the larger your group can get. This is a function of how much time you can spend with each player individually. For example, if your average session is only 4 hours long, you will be hard pressed to please 8 players. However, if your average session is 12 hours long, you can probably make sure that everyone in a 10 player group is satisfied.

Remember the Session Time is only an indicator on when your group is getting too large! Small groups can generally function just as well in short sessions and long sessions.

Role Playing Experience

In general, the more experience your players have at role playing, the more you can spend time with each player individually. This is not because they will better enjoy the time with you (as the GM); but because, they will know how to occupy themselves while you are with everyone else (e.g., they will role play with each other while they are waiting). You will notice that you have to spend less of your own energy with the experienced players. This allows you time to spend with the less experienced players, or more energy in developing the story. Thus, the more experienced your players, the more players you can have in your game.

Recruiting Players

At this point you should have a feel for how many people you can handle during single session. However, do not let this be a measure of how many people to include in your game!

As your groups get larger, it becomes more difficult to find a single time to play that accomodates everyone. You should not play, simply because everyone cannot be there. Play anyway and let those who are absent sit out. When this philosophy is adopted, the number of players in your game can grow quite large (but remember that you are limited by how many people you can handle at any one time).

After your game has begun, do not stop there! Continue keep your eyes and ears open for players who are interested. In this respect, your greatest asset is your current players. They will talk about the latest couple of game sessions, and other potential players will overhear about. Eventually, they will ask for more information and finally be led to you, the GM. You should welcome them.

One important note about recruiting players for your game: do not exclude novice players from your game! Novice players should be embraced by the veterans. Even the most grizzled veteran was a novice once. Remember that novice players are simply veterans without any experience. Do not assume that a group of veterans will be hindered by a novice. Quite often the reverse is true! The novice provides fresh ideas and outlooks on things; injecting new energy into the existing stories.

The Final Numbers

All of this is well and good, but where do you start. For most people, the number of players in their game is not a choice... it is a fact. If there are only six people in the area that play role playing games, then you should have six.

Some GMs love the personal nature of a "one-on-one" type of game (i.e., only one player). Others prefer small 2 or 3 player groups. While others like to run massive affairs with 10 or so players! In general, you can expect that a good number of players to start with is around 4 to 6 (generally remember that the less time you have per session, the fewer players you should have at the session).

2.2 PLAYER REWARDS

There are generally two types of rewards you can give a players: rewards related to the game mechanics and rewards related to the story. Each is handled differently and given out for different reasons.

Rewards with the Mechanics

Most gaming systems have some means of acknowledging good gaming. This could take the form of experience points, extra skills, or other "mechanics" related stuff. While these rewards are good (and appropriate) in any game, do not presume that these are the only types of rewards you can give out as a GM.

Story Rewards

Almost all players have some kind of goal or desire for their character. The best kind of reward that you as the GM can give is the acheivement of this type of goal, through the course of the story. For example, one player may have a young noble who desires to be knighted. This player will feel extremely satisfied if, through the course of play (and his own actions), he is ceremoniously knighted and acknowledged by the people in the gaming world as brave and worthy of such a title.

Unfortunately, this type of reward is sometimes hard to deliver to the player. The biggest obstacle in handing out this type of reward is that you may not know what it is that the player wants for his character! There is really only one simple solution to this problem — ask him. Most players will gladly tell you what they envision for their character. If a player is having difficulty expressing what he wants from his character, you could have a more difficult time. However, this type of player will generally be happy with any acknowledgement of a goal or desire (even if it wasn't quite what he had in mind); and eventually, he will form desires and goals for his character. An important step in this process is to continue to ask players what they want (once every three or four sessions should be often enough).

There is one other major way to reward players through the story, but this is a little more tricky. GMs should encourage the players to speculate on the direction the story is heading (both in character and out of character). Very often, players will have ideas and thoughts about the story that had never entered your head! If your story is flexible enough, you can accomodate some of these elements into the story. Regardless, when the story unfolds the way they predicted, the players will have a good feeling that they were right in the direction it was heading!

2.3 HOUSE RULES

Every gaming group should come up with their own set of House Rules. These should include all of the system mechanics oriented stuff (e.g., this profession is not allowed, these types of actions will be resolved in this fashion, etc.). However, there are two other types of House Rules that should be decided upon: non-system specific rules and game session etiquette. Both of these types of rules are described below.

Non-system Specific Rules

These types of House Rules should include all types of rules that are not directly related to the system mechanics, but are moderated by the GM. The list below provides some common rules of this type.

- Guidelines on what happens to a character in the middle of an adventure when the player for that character cannot attend the session. Possible solutions could include: the character magically disappears until the player returns (not very realistic, but easy to handle in play), the GM plays the character, another player plays the character, etc.
- Guidelines on how often character sheet updates are required. This might include notes on who is responsible for the updates (some GMs update all character sheets and then give the new copy to the players; others require players to have new copies of character sheets every four sessions, etc.).
- Guidelines on what happens with "cocked" dice (or dice that fall off the table). Possible solutions could include: re-roll the dice in question, re-roll all the dice (even those that were not in question).
- Guidelines on what type of dice are acceptable in play. For example, some GMs may rule that there will be no "transparent," un-inked dice. Other GMs may require that all players use only his dice.
- Guidelines on what kind of dice-rolling etiquette is acceptable. For example, some GMs may allow a player to roll multiple dice one at a time, while others will not. Some GMs might require that no dice may be rolled until he asks for the roll (i.e., all rolls prior to the request are ignored).

Session Etiquette Rules

In general, these type of rules are less often determined by the GM than they are determined by the players. If the gaming environment is a fixed location (i.e., you always play at one person's house), the host of the location should have a big say in these type of rules. Listed below are commonly occuring rules of this type.

- Guidelines on when the gaming group will meet. This should include times when the group cannot meet.
- Guidelines on where the gaming group will meet. In general it is best to not keep changing the gaming environment, but sometimes it cannot be helped.
- Guidelines on what kinds of breaks there will be for meals (if there are any).
- Guidelines on what kind of snacks are acceptable at the gaming table (and what kind of snacks are acceptable away from the gaming table).
- Guidelines on who is to provide snacks and/or meals for the group. It is generally a good idea to rotate the responsibility for snacks (though people should recognize that this is not always possible).
- Guidelines on tobacco at the gaming session.
- Guidelines on who is responsible for clean-up after the session. Everyone should help here, but it may be reasonable to rotate clean-up duties among the "non-hosting" players (the GM should take his turn too!).
- Guidelines on what kind of non-game related "distractions" are allowed during session time. For example: Is the TV unplugged during session time? What about the phones and portable steroes? What about non-game related books? Some GMs even have all time-keeping devices (clocks, watches, etc.) removed from the room before the session begins!

These lists are by no means complete. GMs (and players) should develop whatever rules they need to make their gaming sessions run as smoothly as possible. In addition, these rules should be defined as soon as they can (so as to avoid confusion, disappointment, and frustration).

STORY DESIGN

The distinction between the "story" and the "campaign" is an important one. For the most part, the campaign is the backdrop against which story events are set, and the story is that set of events with which the PCs interact. Many GMs prefer to detail the campaign setting first, and then lay stories upon that framework, while others are more interested in a story idea, and will detail the campaign setting afterwards to support the story. If you are of the former category, you may wish to move to the section on Campaign Design (Section 4.0), and return here when you have finished reading that material. However, you are encouraged to read both sections, as they do reflect upon one another.

This section will be limited to design and the decision-making processes of building a story. The methods of presentation and control will be presented in The Session (Section 7.0)

3.1 THE NATURE OF THE STORY

Before one can design a suitable story for a campaign, one should understand what elements are involved. Time spent here on the fundamental building blocks of your story will pay dividends in consistency and focus later on.

A story should have a setting (the campaign), a plot (the story line or theme of the adventure), a cast (the PCs and NPCs), and a climax (the resolution of the story). These should be familiar concepts, although they have been modified for the purposes here. In general, this work will assume that the GM has already invented or is able to invent basic plots, although there are suggestions given on how to find a good plot. GMs who feel unsure of their plot-creation abilities should be sure to read Section 18.5.

The concepts listed above define the basic structure of the story. Before attempting to apply story ideas to paper, however, there are several design elements that should be considered. These concepts are specific to the story in the gaming environment and the maintenance of that environment, rather than to a literary view of the story and its construction.

3.1.1 SCOPE

The first element of the story is the scope. How big should your story be? If you are running a Heroic game, the scope may be large, indeed. It may be that the heroes are battling the Avatar of Evil on your world, and the events of the story will be far-reaching and momentous. The heroes may travel across the breadth of the land, effecting sweeping changes wherever they go. Needless to say, this story would be very large in scope.

On the other hand, you may wish to create intense and personal stories about the everyday lives of your PCs, as they try to survive in the streets of a major city, or perhaps as they wander the deserts as nomadic traders. Such a game would likely be more Austere in format, and the *scope* of the story may be quite narrow.

Visible Scope vs. Actual Scope

In general, the PCs should never have all of the answers within a story. Only rarely do players look beyond the scope of the story in which the PCs find themselves, and this is to the GM's advantage. Through story control and pacing, the PCs (and the players!) will only attend to the visible scope of the story, rather than the actual scope. To the GM this means that there will always be larger events running in the background, affected by and affecting the PCs' environment.

Visible scope is the environment as perceived by the PC. If the PCs are running in an urban adventure, they may see the scope of the story to be relatively narrow. They are tracking down a thief, for instance, and want to return the stolen goods to their rightful owner, who is willing to pay handsomely for them. They have no unusual connections to the authorities, and none of the PCs is a wealthy scion of a powerful noble or the like. The limit of their influence is confined, and therefore the scope of the story is small. Note that this does not in any way imply that a smaller scope is less exciting or rewarding. It simply means that events remain on a local scale, which often means a closer identification of player to PC.

The actual scope of a story defines the limit of effect that the players may have beyond the visible scope. For instance, the PCs chasing that thief may not realize that the stolen goods are actually the property of Lord Aleph of the House Agramond, stolen from him by an agent of the PCs' employer. The thief is an agent of Aleph, and word of the PCs' interference will return to his ears. In this instance, the visible scope of the story is that of a simple bounty hunt, apprehending a thief and returning the purloined items. In the background, however, there are larger wheels in motion. The PCs are stepping into the frying pan all unknowing, and Lord Aleph will soon turn up the heat. The actual scope of the story is one step larger than the visible scope, and at some point the PCs will have to address the consequences of that fact.

Staying Ahead of the Players

The actual scope of the story should always be one step larger than the visible scope. This gives the GM room to run those wheels in the background. And this does not mean that it is all right to increase the size of the visible scope as long as the actual scope increases along with it.

The PCs should never be allowed beyond the visible scope of the story.

Now, having made the rule, here is the exception: The only times the PCs should be given any kind of access at all to the actual scope are during revelations and epiphanies (see below for descriptions of these concepts).

During revelations, the PCs will discover clues or otherwise realize information heretofore hidden within the actual scope. But revelations are only clues. It may be that the PCs will spend weeks trying to discover who has been hounding their steps after that incident with the thief, and events will finally culminate in the discovery and resolution of matters with the noble Lord Aleph. At this epiphany, the PCs will step from the visible scope of the story into the actual scope, and the story will be resolved.



This seems to fly in the face of the caution regarding increasing the scope of the story. One should not forget, however, that the actual scope is the source of endless microstories for the GM and players. The minions of the noble, the clues to the original owner's identity, the various NPCs met along this trail, and all of the other details that will arise during the search for the resolution of the story would not be possible unless the GM were keeping track of events one step larger than the actions of the PCs. Eventually, however, the PCs will come to the answers, and the GM will have to reveal much of what has been going on (the alternative, of course, is to forever keep changing the answers, keeping your players in the dark, and generally frustrating the lot of them). This point, in which the PCs receive major revelations regarding the story and resolve (successfully or not) the story goals, is actually the only suitable moment in which to allow the PCs access to the actual scope. The reason is that it is the only time at which the GM may move the PCs backwards in story scope with relative ease. Since the resolution of the story usually requires that the PCs enter the actual scope, they have suddenly had the scope increased. However, after the events of the story have been resolved, it is possible to send the PCs back to the previous level. They have risen above themselves to accomplish their goal, and the sting of a return to the previous scope will be tempered by the satisfaction of the feat just accomplished. While it may not be quite the same level as before, it is not a full step up. In the example given thus far, the PCs might finally confront Lord Aleph, who will then recount his actions in the matter. The PCs may learn important information about the noble, and the item in question may itself have some significance. If the PCs play their cards right, they may make an ally in Lord Aleph, and when they return to their normal lives, having accomplished their goal, they will have a little something in their pocket-the gratitude of a noble.

The Bottom Line

A rule of thumb is: The easier it is for the PCs to affect overall campaign elements, the larger the scope of the story must be. If your PCs are able to influence the major political powers in your campaign, you are going to have to allow for that influence. You must have an understanding of what such influence will entail, as well as what will result. If the PCs blithely convince the King of Rethem to cast out the ambassadors of a neighboring country as spies, you should account for the other country's reaction to it, and weave that reaction back into the story later. Stories should never operate in a vacuum, and the scope of your story will help you decide what the boundaries of response should be.

In a more Austere game, it may be that the most outrageous response to a PC action will be the calling of the city guard to oust them from the tavern in which they are fighting. If a PC is concerned with daily survival, he will not be trying to gain the ear of the King, in all likelihood.

Remember, players will take up every rein you drop for them. If you let them influence major events, they will wish to continue doing so, and either you will have to allow it or find a way to bring the story back under control. Once you have increased the scope of the story, the players will usually be very reluctant to let you reduce it again. The metabolism of the story will have increased (see Section 5.3 for more on metabolism), and more powerful fuel will be required to maintain the pace.

So be careful, because players will insist on getting to see the actual scope now and again. Let them do so by doing it during epiphanies, when you can easily bring them back under control.



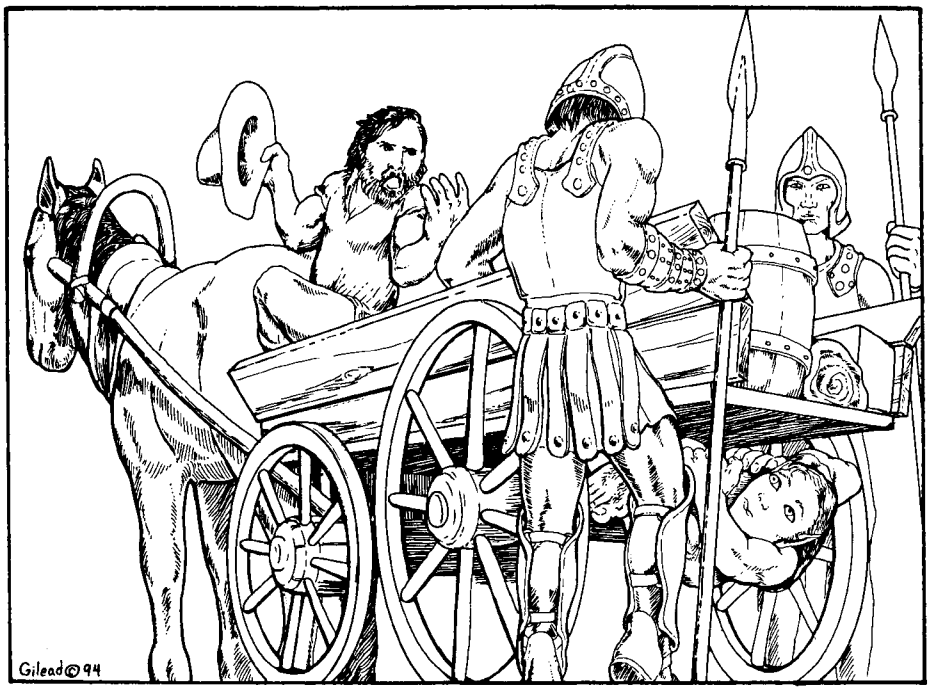
3.1.2 STRUCTURE

Once you have determined the scope of your story, you must decide upon the structure. It is through the structure of the story that you create the mechanisms by which the PCs can explore the scope of your story. An important concept in story structure is focus. There are two extremes of focus: microscopic and macroscopic. Most GMs and stories will fall somewhere in between these two, but a look at the two extremes will help define what is meant.

Adjusting the Focus

An extreme microscopic focus means trying to include every trivial detail. Every ounce of encumbrance is accounted for, every leaf on every tree is elegantly described and the PCs had best determine the schedule for calls of nature. Some GMs handle almost this level of detail remarkably well, but too much of this can kill role play through sheer exhaustion and boredom. There is certainly such a thing as too much detail.

Macroscopic focus means taking such a wide view there is little or no role play at all, only wargaming. Pawns are sent to and fro to accomplish an objective, and results are determined. Some GMs come close to this by never having players enter their character personas, allowing them instead to simply tell the GM what they *want* to do rather than having them *do* it in character.



Obviously, no one works at either of these extremes-at least not for very long. But somewhere within that range falls every GM out there, and it is a good idea to understand just where you fall. A remarkable number of GMs, when they finally take the time to think about it, decide that they would like to adjust the focus they apply to their stories. They realize that they are wasting time in some areas and moving too quickly over others.

For instance, if you have decided that you will be limiting the scope of the adventure to the daily events of the PCs in an urban environment, then you will want to structure the story in such a way that small events may be explored in detail. You will want to provide subtle and evocative clues to the setting, and have the characters play out most of their character's actual activities in specific fashion. Travel time in a Heroic game, for instance, may be "blank" time, quickly glossed over to move to the next event in the story. "The mighty Hero travels to the Duchy of Pentarra to muster troops for the defense of Oman Thrad in the West."

The focus of your story will be especially important when the time comes to detail story and campaign elements before and between sessions.

So What Else?

The next consideration in story structure is the story line itself. As stated before, it is generally assumed that you are able to come up with basic story ideas, but what should those ideas include?

First of all, a story should include areas of interest not only to each one of the PCs but each one of the players, as well. If you have one player who loves a good fight and one who thrives on mysteries, try to include a little of both in your story, unless you're going to create a very short story that centers around a single PC (stories such as these should rarely span more than a single session, as they tend to leave the other players out of the main interest, and that can quickly become boring to all but the involved player). In addition, try to give each PC a part in the story. If the player playing a druid loves mysteries, and all the party ever encounters are urban murder mysteries, he is quickly going to wish he had chosen a different character-one better suited to pursuing the stories the party is given. The time that a PC gets to spend in the "limelight" of the story is called story share, and the background knowledge and skills that the PC can bring to bear upon the story is called story leverage. These concepts are addressed under Section 3.7, Creating Character Backgrounds.

Second, a story should move in a particular direction. In a Free-form Story Format, and especially with an Open Game Style, it is easy to give the players so much free rein and lack of focus that the game languishes under its own sluggishness. It is not necessary to have a grand scheme for the entire campaign and game at all times, but one or more small story lines should always be running or beginning. If you have been keeping track of the actual scope, there should always be several events happening in the background that may come back to affect the players, even if not of their doing. War is a common tool to maintain interest and action in the foreground. The possibilities are endless, so use them!

Finally, a story should build to a series of small climaxes and a larger, final climax, or epiphany. Even Free-form Formats should provide the players and PCs with moments of success and revelation. Besides their value in controlling story scope, the players will demand them. Endless wandering or running around a countryside in search of answers and a place to sleep will get boring very quickly if that's *all* that they ever get to do. Players want to succeed, and they should be allowed to. Note that this does *not* mean that they must perform some great deed or boon to all mankind every few weeks. These successes can be as small as an excellent role playing moment, or the successful

conclusion of a business deal, or anything that can be viewed as a satisfactory success by GM and player. The small successes will serve as revelations, leading towards the larger and final one. In particularly dark games, it may even simply be the PC surviving another day or week. If this can be viewed by GM and player as a significant success, then it will work. But if eventually the players can catch a glimpse of the larger workings behind the story, the level of satisfaction and excitement will be that much higher. Use these moments wisely and with restraint, but use them.

3.1.3 MOOD

The dictionary definition of mood is: "a conscious state of mind or predominant emotion." In story terms, this term describes the feelings evoked in the players by the story. Heroic games are often epic in mood, with grand events and powerful personalities sweeping across the campaign and story. The mood evoked in the player is often similarly broad in nature and scope. Mundane details are ignored or glossed over in order to charge the scenario with that epic feel.

Another gamemaster may decide to have a more "gritty" mood, in which the players feel the sand blown in their eyes and slog through the mud between the alleys of a border town. The PCs may care nothing for the broad view, being more interested in surviving another day or perhaps making enough money to live soft for a time. The genre of "cyberpunk" is an excellent example of a "gritty" mood.

In choosing a mood, consider what sort of feel you wish the story to have. It will be difficult if not impossible to maintain a consistent feel if you have not predetermined this and designed the story accordingly. Here are a few things to consider in the selection of a mood for your story.

We Who Are About To...

Are the characters allowed to die or are they to be kept alive until the conclusion of the epic, by hook or by crook? Games in which death is an obvious possibility have a very different feel and players will play their cards very close to the chest. In an Austere game, traps don't hinder, they kill. Enemies have no interest in seeing the PCs in elaborate deathtraps, they want them dead, plain and simple. These games have a more dangerous feel, in which the careless step might be the last, and a hand by your sword is better than a twinkle in your eye.

In Heroic games, on the other hand, characters die very seldom, if at all. In some Heroic games *nobody* ever dies, they just get knocked around and return next week (superhero games being the most obvious example of this style of play). In a fantasy setting this may be because the PCs are predestined for greatness of some kind, or they may be critical to the resolution of the story, and a premature death by any means other than pure player stupidity would be unsatisfactory. In any case, the players will have a freer hand in attempting great deeds and mighty battles.

The most difficult game to balance, of course, is the Austere Heroic game, in which the PCs are indeed predestined to greatness... if they live. Here death remains a very real possibility, and the PCs must be careful lest they die before they can achieve the story goals. The difficulty lies in the fact that at a certain point in the progression of the story, a particular PC may become critical to the resolution of the story, and the GM may (at times) need to maneuver that PC out of a senseless death or two. The ability to fudge for a player without letting that player know that you have done so is a difficult skill to master. If the PC catches even a whiff of such machinations from the GM, the mood for that PC will have changed, and the icy thrill of danger will be lessened for it. Techniques for this kind of machination are discussed later.

Abandon All Hope...

There are a number of games and settings in which the PCs are placed in a world in which nearly all hope is gone, with no redemption in sight. Cyberpunk genres, dying worlds, apocalypse scenarios... the major PC concern is survival, and only the fittest make it. Typically classified as "dark" role playing, these games offer an extra edge in danger and at times, in detail. Of course, they lose that triumphant feel of good conquering evil, or of making a difference... consider these issues in terms of your players' likes and dislikes. Are they going to enjoy a world in which there is no possibility of things improving, only a desperate maintenance of an already miserable status quo? Are they tired of elves and orcs and grand fantasy, and want something more "gritty" to sink their teeth into? This aspect of a game is perhaps the most clear-cut expression of the mood of a game.

Other examples of mood abound, but this hopefully will give you something to think about. If you change the mood in the middle of a game, it should never be through lack of attention or control. It should be because of a specific story mechanism that has created this radical change in the feel of the story.

3.1.4 PACING

Perhaps the most vital element in keeping a story alive is the pacing. It is also the element most likely to escape the control of the GM. The pacing of a story is defined by the structure of the story, and will affect the mood in turn. This is the stage in which the GM needs to decide the breaks in the story, and decide how the flow of the story will be regulated.

Different players prefer different styles. Some players are highly analytical, preferring to break down a problem or situation to its smallest constituents before deciding upon a course of action. Others relish the excitement and action of a fast-paced game, investing heavily in the story with emotional and even physical energy. At times you will want to match a story's pacing to the desires of the player. At other times, you may wish to bring a player to a different level of involvement by changing the pacing, or perhaps you simply wish to give the players a change of pace (pun intended).

Needless to say, a story will move at different paces during different parts of the story. You may wish to start off with a fast pace to get the energy high and then move into a calmer mode to explore the ramifications of the initial scene. A mystery story may have a sedate pace throughout the entire story up until the climax, wherein things come to a head in both energy and scope.

Whatever you decide, create story mechanisms to maintain that pacing. Create small encounters that can be dropped in anywhere in the story to boost the flow of the game. Remember where and when the revelations and epiphanies are to take place and structure events to achieve those moments.

So It Is Written...

Perhaps the most intensive pacing tasks are found in stories built around a prophecy. Not so difficult if the prophecy merely says "Great Heroes Shall Save The Land", but what about the prophecies that like to give locations and dates? The GM must not only bring the characters through the events, but he must bring them through at the right time, even if they are faster in some areas than they should be and slower in others! Fortunately, there are tricks one can play with pacing to keep these problems under control.

Make the references flexible. A prophecy that details something that will happen in "ten and ten thousand breaths..." is a lot more flexible than a prophecy that says, "Tuesday, at 12:30...". Was that 10,010 breaths, or 20,000 breaths? Whose breath? Soon you'll have PCs timing each other trying to determine how long the correct breath is, and your flexibility is assured. You can wait until the PCs have approached either limit and begin to bring events to a head. If they move too quickly, it's the short version; if not, the long.

Hide or obscure the references. The old prophet tells the party, "The Sword of Hope may only be drawn by brightest knight or darkest pawn." Whoops! Was that "brightest *knight* or *night*?" If you had the old prophet mumble a bit, they may get confused by the last word, "*pawn* or *dawn?*" The players will move at double speed to cover both angles (or all four!) before the time of the prophecy is nigh.

A prophecy game offers greater than average problems in pacing, and in mood as well. If the players believe that the GM is going to herd them in the right direction, there is little incentive to try and get the better of the story. In the examples above, note that they deal with confusing or obscuring the issue, so that the players could screw things up by not understanding or preparing sufficiently. These methods will keep players moving at double-time to make sure they have either discovered the right answer or that they can cover all sides in a pinch.

And Now For Something Completely Different...

The best way to control pacing in other styles of games is through story injections. These are encounters placed in the story for the sole purpose of bringing the story back to the fore. For example, if the PCs have been spending far too much time examining the ruins of the old keep, and the game is bogging down, have a runner arrive with an important message, or have the lookout see the dust of horses down the road. If the players keep following dead ends, have an NPC standing by to come and get them back on track through a few subtly dropped clues. The street urchin who knows more than anyone thinks, or the barber who knows all the gossip are common mechanisms in literature and cinema. Slightly serendipitous in nature, they can nonetheless be injected carefully enough that it seems like a genuine part of the story, rather than a message from the GM telling the players to "...get back to the point...".

It's always a good idea to create a few NPCs like this beforehand, if possible, so that you will have time to detail their personality and reasons for having such knowledge, as well as their reasons for being in a particular place or time so conveniently for the party. Without this foundation, such NPCs are in danger of becoming large Walking Clues, and will be instantly recognizable to the players as such. If, on the other hand, the NPC has been seen there before, or is engaged in something obviously in keeping with his background, the players will instead be congratulating themselves on having discovered the valuable clue, while you sigh in relief at having pulled the story back on track.

3.2 INSPIRATION

Coming up with a story idea can seem difficult, but most GMs are able to manage it, or they would not have sought to become GMs. Typically, if you do not have a story you want to tell, you remain a player, preferring to explore other GMs' stories and help bring them to life. This section therefore deals with finding inspirations to fully clothe your existing story idea.

3.2.1 THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION

Inspiration is essentially "a burst of creativity". When you are in the middle of play, and a PC asks your silk merchant where he's from, and you suddenly begin to describe a previously unrealized land off the top of your head, that's inspiration. When you are sitting at your desk tapping your teeth with your pencil trying to come up with a reason why Lord Sigfried would show up at the PC's dinner engagement next session, you are looking for inspiration.

Some GMs seem to be able to pluck complete microstories from thin air at will. That's great, if you are one of those GMs. Other GMs have to rely more on preparation and foresight to ensure they will not be caught flat-footed. Of course, any GM is going to have to learn to be able to think on his or her feet, but only a few GMs are truly adept at pure improvisational gaming. In general, time spent in preparation is always time well spent.

Essentially, every GM has at his or her disposal a certain amount of creative resources. These resources must be allocated to various tasks during a game session: keeping track of game time, running NPCs in-character, describing the scenes and settings, etc. Often the greatest draw upon a GM's creative resources is the improvisation required to answer player questions which the GM has not anticipated. Because of the need for consistency and accuracy within the setting, these improvisations require a lot of instant oversight of details and spot tuning. (Where is the NPC from and do the PCs know what that country is like? Does the NPC have this or that piece of information? Is this NPC a candidate for PC recruitment, and if so, what should the appropriate skills be? How is the NPC dressed, given the background and circumstances?) The rapid addressing of all of these issues is a draw upon the GM, and other sections of the story may suffer as resources (usually scene detail) are shifted to introduce this new element consistently.

This problem also makes some GMs unwilling to invest too much life into the NPCs at first, before the results can be examined and weighed. This is unfortunate, as often these improvisations can lead to some of the most interesting and fruitful sessions of the story.



However, it is also the nature of inspiration that it relies heavily on familiarity. The cleanest and most plentiful inspirations usually flow from those areas upon which the GM has a firm grasp of the finer details. This is also the reason many GMs continue to run stories in the same campaign setting for years. The deep familiarity with the material frees massive amounts of creative resources because the groundwork is so solid. The GM knows what the clothing, accent and heritage of the NPC is like, because previous work has already detailed those elements, and the resources that might have been allocated to the production of those details are now freed for use in fleshing the personality of the NPC, deciding upon motivations and otherwise maintaining the scene.

3.2.2 INSPIRATION VERSUS PERSPIRATION

The old adage that "Invention is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration" is largely true in story design. Most of the inspiration and improvisation within a story comes after the story has begun. Before then, the GM needs to flesh out as much of the story as he can (or has the time to). Remember: "what you don't know must be invented, and what you already know can be embellished." At times it can be boring or time-consuming, but go ahead and sketch out the city map, or at least the major roads and sections. Write a two paragraph history of each of the major NPCs and decide who else they know and what important story clues they may have. Write out that prophecy, so that you can quote accurately from it. "Be prepared." Creative resources are not easily come by, and the more complete and consistent you want your world to be, the more of them you will need when the session begins.

3.2.3 GENERATING INSPIRATION

There are several methods one can use to get the creative juices flowing. One is simply to keep track of things mentioned in your game session. It's always a good idea to tape record game sessions, or at least take good notes, so that you will not forget important information that has been passed on or the description of that obscure NPC whom you find utterly forgettable and the PCs find eminently memorable. But recording your sessions reaps other benefits as well. Often PCs will fit clues together in odd ways that are not correct, but *could* be. Keep track of them and consider them as possible microstories to be woven into the larger story. Almost every GM drops perhaps a score or more great story ideas or adjustments into each game session without even realizing it, through NPC offhand comments or thoughts, or simply discussion of the situation with the players. Don't berate yourself for forgetting that fantastic idea you had during the session in the middle of that extended combat, write it down or record it when it occurs. The next time you sit down to generate more story design and detail, you will have inspiration already at your fingertips.

Another method of generating inspiration is simply rereading your old material. When a story begins to span weeks and months, and your notes are scattered across pages of different notebooks and notes scribbled on napkins and in the margins of textbooks, the GM quickly forgets some of those great initial ideas that began the story and were lost when the design took another tack. Drag them out now. Reread everything, including the character backgrounds. Look for areas that need more work, and spend some time updating these old ideas into a fresh new story detail.

3.2.4 WHEN INSPIRATION FAILS

If you have tried every trick and are having trouble coming up with new story ideas and details, or are baffled as to how to resolve a story crisis, then don't be bashful... get help. Most GMs *love* to trade story ideas, or just regale others with their own ideas. 9 out of 10 GMs will give you far more feedback than you could possibly want if you ask their help with a story problem. Another viewpoint can often stimulate your own thought processes, even if you never do use their ideas.

In this age of communication, the on-line services are finally coming into their own as well. Every major on-line service has an area dedicated to gamers and role-players, and a question posted to one of these areas will elicit an amazing amount of response. Not all of it will be helpful, but much of it will be.

And finally, if everything else has failed, then go with what has already worked. Section 3.3, Existing Material, and Section 3.4, Additional Sources, detail some of the other ways you can gather story material when inspiration has failed you.



3.3 EXISTING MATERIAL

One of the most lucrative and efficient resources at a GM's disposal is pre-existing material. A GM should never feel that previously developed material cannot be reused. There are times when the PCs have not fully explored the depths of a particular story setting, and at times PCs will avoid a particular story detail entirely. These items are ripe for placement in other sections of the current story or future ones.

3.3.1 PREVIOUS STORIES

Most GMs run games for more than one group at some point. Sometimes the old group breaks up, moves away, or simply cannot find the time anymore. Perhaps the attrition rate of graduating college students causes the group to evolve from the original cast into an entirely new group every four or five years. Whatever the means, the fact remains that a GM may find himself running an entirely different group of players. If the group has been built upon the events and deeds of previous PC groups, the opportunities for reuse of previous material may be fewer. If the current group knows of the exploits of the last group, they may have the answers to the mysteries of the old stories, but it is unlikely that they will know the specifics. It is always possible to reuse that great tavern setting developed over years of play, or perhaps the sage at the end of the street. NPCs do not just disappear; they must die, leave or remain, and will provide useful story material regardless.

If the PC group has no knowledge of the previous adventures, it may be possible to lift entire stories from the old group and reuse them for the new one. These stories will be better for the retelling, as the GM is no longer trying to create details as the story progresses. The finer details are already in place, and the extra creativity may be utilized in further detailing the story in previously unexplored areas. For example, if the last group had an adventure in which they broke into a nobleman's house to find a valuable statue, the majority of the GM's creative resources were likely used trying to keep up with the constantly evolving circumstances. (The PCs made enough noise to wake the butler, what happens.... The PCs want a thorough description of the layout of the house... the PCs ask how far it is to the nearest guard house, etc.) On this second run, all of these details are already established, along with a number of contingencies that are now accounted for by virtue of the previous groups' decisions. This time, the GM can focus on the details missed before... the smell of the room, the sounds of the night, the paintings on the wall and the shadows in that corner... creative resources are freed, and the story improves.

As a side note, this can be an important method of developing adventure material. Tournaments, for example, should never be run cold the first time. Playtesters will help the GM to flesh out the setting and fix the personalities of the NPCs in his mind. The later runs always go more smoothly for the greater familiarity with setting and NPCs.

3.3.2 UNUSED CURRENT MATERIAL

Unused current story material is as easy (and as important) to reuse as previous story material. Very often a GM will detail a section of the story for the PCs to explore, only to have the PCs decide to go in an entirely different direction altogether. While this can be frustrating, it is often better to plan to use the material later rather than trying to encourage or force the players to go back and explore painstakingly crafted material. Players are very aware of GM influence. Players enjoy being awed and impressed at the creativity of the GM, but not if they are strapped into an appreciation chair and wheeled through it. Before trying to influence player actions, always try to look objectively at your own motives. Is it vitally important to the story that the players explore this area? Or is it important to *you* that they see this material because of the pride and effort involved? If the latter is the case, then the answer is to let them move in the direction they wish, and save the material for later use.

What if They Never Come Back?

Don't worry about it. Players always return to the most interesting places in a campaign or story. If you have made the setting come alive for them, they will want to return there because they will know they haven't seen everything there is to see, and players are the most insatiably curious creatures alive. Even if they did miss a previously developed setting, they will likely return later and you will have another chance to use it.

More often, such settings will contain important story information that they will later realize they do not have. If the PCs are looking as though they intend to skip a developed setting that contains important story information, stop and think before you try to steer them towards it. Is this information vital to them *now*? If they do not get it at this point in the story, will they have another opportunity at a later time? If so, then let them skip it and place it in their path later in the story.

3.3.3 INTEGRATING SESSION RESULTS

This topic will be discussed in full in Section 5.0, Story Progression, but you should realize now the need to maintain and integrate your ongoing material that is developed in session. Every time your group meets you will develop new and unprecedented material, simply from the need to give the players something to work with at any given time. The name of the waiter, the style of headdress on the nomads, the smells of evening near the south part of town... all of these serendipitous details need to be retained and placed back into your overall story design, and your design needs to allow for it.

This may seem slightly confusing. How can one allow for improvisation when the very nature of improvisation means you cannot know what is going to happen? The important thing is to recognize what you are allowed to improvise. If an important story element is the recognition of the style of headdress on the desert nomads, then you should not be developing these details off-the-cuff. You should already know these details before play begins so that you can give consistent clues to your players.

Obviously, one cannot try to compile a list of the things that one *can* improvise. The list would literally be endless. One can, however, compile a list of the things which *cannot* be improvised. Look through your story design and make a list of the clues and vital elements within the story. If you are running a mystery story, the list will likely be quite long. If you are running a straightforward mission game of some kind, the list might be shorter. Here are a few things to consider: What elements do you want to reintroduce farther down the road? What elements are vital clues to the puzzles within the story? Which elements have to do with the character's own background? Which elements have appeared in previous adventures? Each of these are important things to pin down before the adventure begins so that you will not find yourself contradicting earlier or future improvisations.

Finally, and fortunately, players are notoriously easy to fool. A few elements of consistency embedded within a sea of improvisation can cause them to think that you have every detail of an entire imaginary world floating in your head. The tiniest consistencies are sometimes the most convincing, and will elicit attention far beyond their actual value. As long as you later return to your story design and integrate your latest improvisations into the overall story, you can create the illusion that it was that way all along, and you will awe and delight your players.

3.4 ADDITIONAL SOURCES

A GM should never worry about drawing story ideas from outside sources.

3.4.1 BOOKS

Books are an excellent source of story material. Often an author will present the reader with a complete packaged setting and set of stories. In addition, authors very often have interesting characters that can be used as NPCs. Listed below are some of the books that we feel provide some great inspirational reading.

A Brief List of Inspirational Reading

The Black Company, Glen Cook	The Once and Future King, T.H. White
Dragonbane, Barbara Hambly	One Corpse Too Many, Ellis Peters
Ender's Game, Orson Scott Card	Pawn of Prophecy, David Eddings
Goblin Mirror, C.J. Cherryh	Pillars of the Earth, Ken Follet
Hamlet, William Shakespeare	Red Branch, Morgan Llewelyn
The Hero and the Crown, Robin McKinley	The Riddlemaster of Hed, Patricia McKillip
The Hobbit, J.R.R. Tolkien	The River of the Dancing Gods, Jack Chalker
Interview with a Vampire, Anne Rice	Shadow of the Torturer, Gene Wolf
The Lord of the Rings, J.R.R. Tolkien	Spellsinger, Alan Dean Foster
The Lords of the Middle Dark, Jack Chalker	The Sword of Shannara, Terry Brooks
Magician: Apprentice, Raymond Fiest	Thieves World, edited by Robert L. Asprin
Mists of Avalon, Marion Bradley	Three Hearts & Three Lions, Poul Anderson
The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco	The Wheel of Time, Robert Jordan

3.4.2 MUSIC

Some people find music particularly inspiring. You might try listening to various sources of music when you are seeking inspiration. Let your mind wander as the music plays... sometimes the muse will strike.

3.4.3 MOVIES

Like books, movies are also a great place to derive inspiration. GMs should pay particular attention to the way that the director has presented his story (as his job is similar to yours). Notice things that you would describe in a session and the sequence that events unfold. Listed below are some movies that we feel provide inspirational viewing.

A Brief List of Inspirational Viewing

The Beastmaster	Macbeth (1971)
Conan the Barbarian	Monty Python and the Holy Grail
Dragonslayer	The Name of the Rose
Excalibur	Poltergiest
Flesh and Blood	The Princess Bride
The Goonies	Robin and Marion
Hawk the Slayer	Rosencrantz and Gildenstern are Dead
Hearts and Armor	Shogun
Henry V (1992)	Star Wars
Highlander	Stargate
In the Mouth of Madness	Sword in the Stone
Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark	The Three Musketeers
Ladyhawke	Willow

3.4.4 OTHER CAMPAIGNS

Just because an idea or technique was created by another GM does not mean you cannot incorporate those ideas into your own material. Watch other gaming groups. Watch other GMs, noting their style and techniques for possible integration into your own methods.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and few GMs will be upset to hear that you would like to use their ideas (as long as you don't intend to publish or make money from their ideas). Accents, names, pacing, locations, puzzles... all of these small creative elements take creative resources to develop, and using another's efforts to good avail only makes sense.

3.4.5 OTHER GAMES

Rolemaster is not just a role playing game. It is also a kit for building your own games. It may be that another game system has a setting you particularly enjoy, but you find the mechanics to be lacking. Or you may simply prefer the ***Rolemaster*** system but want to use ideas from other game systems. Do it! No game is your own until you make it your own. No one will censure you for mixing and matching, and ***Rolemaster*** lends itself extremely well to adaptation with other game systems, having been designed with that in mind. A creative mind is a creative mind, and a good idea is a good idea. If you pull your favorite elements from every game you love, perhaps you can build the game that is perfect for you.

3.4.6 PLAYER INPUT

Do not forget: Your players are the best judges of what they enjoy the most. Ask your players what they want! They may well surprise you. Sometimes players will want to pursue a particular area of your setting because the taste they've had intrigues them. You will also receive valuable feedback regarding your style and presentation of the story material. Players (and GMs) love to talk about good sessions, and what they liked most about those sessions. Listen carefully, and try to respond to the desires of your players.

3.5 CREATING A STORY

Now that the foundation of your story has been fixed, it is time to look at the framework. The framework of the story is the detail and preparatory work you must complete before the session in order to have it run smoothly. While some GMs are comfortable running with little or no framework at all, most GMs prefer to do some of the work beforehand, in order to free up their creative resources during the session.

3.5.1 HOW MUCH PREPARATION?

This depends entirely upon the GM. Some GMs want to have every possible encounter, location and possible event detailed and ready just in case the PCs stumble across it. Very often these are the GMs who will astound their players with the level of complexity and consistency in their games, but unfortunately these tend also to be the GMs who are loathe to allow the players much in the way of free rein. After all, what if the players don't decide to follow up on a particular encounter? All that work—wasted! (No, not really... see Section 3.3.2, Unused Current Material).

If you have been a GM for a long time, you probably have a fairly good idea of how much preparatory work and how much improvisation you are comfortable with in a game session. If you find yourself continually surprised, then consider these questions before beginning preparation for a story:

What are the most interesting parts of the story? Now be careful with this question, because you may be biased. If you know that a particular door leads to a fascinating encounter, but right next to that door is another door bound in ornate brass and iron, with intricate carvings, you can be pretty sure which door the PCs are going to want to check behind first. Try to forget your knowledge of the story for a while and examine the elements of your story with an objective eye. This will allow you to do two things... prepare for the sections of the story that will most likely generate interest in your players, and allow you to tune those areas if they are drawing too much interest from the story.

What have these players pursued in the past? If this is the first session with these players, this is difficult, but even then you can try asking their previous GM(s) or the players themselves (as long as you are exceedingly subtle about it). If you have GMed them before, then you probably have an idea of their interests (e.g., the mage loves to examine old books, the warrior is always looking for a new exotic weapon to add to his already cumbersome collection, etc.). It may be that these players must poke and test everything before they will proceed, and you will need to account for that in your preparation (of course, one of the best ways to handle that is to give them a few encounters that teach them not to be so poky).

What kind of pace has been set? If the story has the players racing around to accomplish something in a certain amount of time, they will often not stop to examine everything (and you should encourage this). There is probably no sense in detailing the entire interior of the roadside tavern on a courier run if it is not going to be the site of a significant planned encounter. If the PCs are just going to scoot in, get some food and rest and run out the next morning, time spent here would be better spent elsewhere in your planning. But watch for those encounters meant to break the pace (for instance, the PCs have been racing across the countryside to reach the secret temple before nightfall, have done so, and now must worry about possible hostile inhabitants), as those encounters will demand detail. If you have been



racing the players in a certain direction, giving them quick and sporadic detail to maintain the energy and pace of the scene, and then bring them to a screeching halt at some encounter, you can be quite sure they will want a wealth of information about what they've just stumbled into. Prepare accordingly.

Has this been or is this to be a regular location? As stated earlier, players become attached to certain locations in your setting and story. They may have the bartender with whom they are building a relationship, or the city guard who always has the tip for them. If you perceive or expect the players to attach themselves to a particular element of your story, then detail it. Nothing draws players into a game better than familiarity with the scene, and some of the best role playing takes place in these settings, as the players may plumb the depths of the guard's past, or flirt with the waiter at their favorite restaurant. These little spots of familiarity are important to the player, and you should do your best to provide them to the players in as full and consistent a fashion as possible—which means preparation. This sometimes entails nothing but keeping track of what was said in the last session and writing it down to keep from forgetting it. It's a small bit of story leverage that the players will relish.

3.5.2 STORY TUNING

Tuning the story means adjusting the details to the current environment, which includes players, the latest campaign events, and other considerations up to and including the location in which the players and GM are going to meet (if you're going to play a leg of the adventure on the bus traveling to a games convention, there may be little opportunity for physical or vocal investment).

To a significant degree, story tuning is handled by some of the other mechanisms described here. Careful attention to character design, metabolism and story structure and the other details described herein will help to tune your story as you go. Final details should be examined, however, and the overall picture checked for problems. One of the best methods of accomplishing this is the dry run.

Dry Runs

This is exactly what it sounds like... testing the adventure by running through it yourself or with the help of others. If you have someone to help you, this method is far more effective, but it is possible to learn a great deal simply by examining the material by yourself. Run through each scene and examine the following factors:

Items of Interest - What elements of the scene are most likely to draw the attention of the players? Are the elements that draw the most attention the ones that should be doing so? You might want to draw more focus to the key elements, unless you are intentionally trying to mislead the players.

NPCs - Are the NPCs where they should be? Which ones will the PCs need to speak with and which ones will the PCs want to speak with? If you need an NPC to impart information to the group, or if you need to give the PCs the opportunity to question a particular NPC, then think of a reason for that NPC to be present and available, or even why that NPC might approach the group.

Detail - Run through a quick description of the scene. Think of what else is needed to explain it to the players. Remember, you know what it looks like, and the PCs are supposed to know what it looks like, but you must make certain that the players can see the scene as well, or their connection to it will be very low. Give some thought to the materials used in construction of buildings, wildlife, plant life, weather and time of day (if that's known beforehand), people in the street, children at play, etc. It is not even necessary to write all of this detail down... having thought about it once, the second (and genuine) run through the material will have a wealth of detail from which to draw, as minor details are recalled and new ones added. Maximize your creative resources during the session!

Balance and Metabolism - Take another look at the material you have. What if the PCs perform beyond expectation? What if they find *every* magical item you have placed and complete *every* task you have set? Have you given them too much power? Too much influence? Make sure that you have control of the final outcome before you begin, because taking scope away from the PCs arbitrarily is never appreciated by the players. At the same time, of course, be sure that you are rewarding the efforts of the PCs commensurate to their effort. Just remember that saving a village from an ogre does not merit you coughing up a +50 sword of Holy Cleaving just because some random chart or packaged adventure indicated it. Keep your game tuned the way you want it, and examine all rewards, temporal or otherwise, for their balance within the game you wish to run.

3.5.3 UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN STRENGTHS

If you are an experienced GM, it should not be too difficult to pin down the areas in which you are comfortable. Some GMs pride themselves on presentation and story control, while others feel they are best at organization and preparation. Do not be too modest to acknowledge these things in yourself. It is important that you work on the weak areas, but few player groups will enjoy being guinea pigs while you work out GMing problems with their beloved characters ("Oops, sorry, well, next time it won't be a dragon, then"). Play to your own strengths and address your weaknesses one at a time in small doses.

If you are not sure what your own strengths are, then examine your style of play. Do you focus more on description and setting, or on mechanics? Do you value role play more highly than solving puzzles and accomplishing goals? Are you full of great ideas for how dwarves behave but feel clueless with elves?

Essentially, what parts of each game session do you find the group spending more time on? With few exceptions, the players will gravitate towards those areas in which the GM is the most comfortable, because it is in those areas that the GM spends the most time, focus, energy, etc. The players will tune into this and explore those areas more fully. Few players will push hard to pursue areas in which the GM has no interest, and the increased energy and detail of the areas in which the GM does have an interest will draw player interest like bees to honey. If you take a hard look at your own sessions, they should stand out clearly.

Once you have decided upon your particular areas of strength, try to find ways to play to them. If your forte is in PC-NPC interaction, then allow yourself to give those NPC encounters more time. If the PCs love the brisk and exciting way in which you handle combat, you may want to give them more opportunities for it.

Having said all of that, of course, there is another important consideration. If you are using an Active techniques, it may well be that you are imposing your likes and dislikes on the party. It should go without saying, but if the PCs are pursuing your areas of interest not because they enjoy it but because you keep steering them that way, you should reexamine your style and/or methods. Players want to participate, not jump through hoops. Bear it in mind as you design your story and story approach.

3.5.4 UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN LIMITATIONS

Just as important as playing to your own strengths is the knowledge of your own weaknesses. If you do not feel fluent with the mechanics of the game, combat or special maneuvers may run slowly, killing the pace of the game. If you aren't comfortable with your acting skills, you may tend to skip over NPC/PC dialogues, using the "The guard says this or that" method, rather than actual role play.

Make an honest appraisal of your own skills. Armed with the knowledge of your own strengths, you should be able to tune the story to provide the most enjoyment for all. In addition, you should address your deficiencies with care, working to improve yourself as you watch your players improve. Remember, the most important thing in role-playing is to have fun, but without exception the most fun is had when you learn something as well. That may be as simple as learning about a new facet of the game system, or it may be as complex as a new understanding of how you wish to portray your character. As stated above, don't subject your players to "experiments," but give yourself a new challenge each session. Players are amazingly perceptive and will not only notice your improvement, but will work with you to improve your own skills as a GM. After all, it is in their interests that you become the best GM you can be.

3.6 NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Many GMs forget that stories have no life of their own. The story will not look after its own interests, or ensure that it remains consistent, or react to the actions or non-actions of the participants. The participants cause the story to unfold and develop. And in general, while the PCs are the primary focus of a story, the story itself is represented by the non-player characters. The non-player characters create the conflict, the intrigue and even the love interest within the story, and without them the GM would have no way to affect the PCs (unless the story is to be nothing but a series of traps and puzzles).

3.6.1 THE VALUE OF NPCS

Non-player characters are one of the best (if not *the* best) tools for bringing a player into a story. All of the description in the world may not suffice to draw the player from "observation and evaluation" mode into "role playing" mode. The more the GM attempts to draw an emotional response from the players by describing the mood, setting, or even terror of a situation, the more the players may start flipping through their skill sheets to see whether they have the Detect Ambush skill. The GM must find a way to break through that "wall of detachment".

Fortunately, the NPC is exactly the tool required to do the job. NPCs require in-character interaction from the PCs, and therefore the players. When an NPC asks a question, or demands something, the GM should never let the players say, "My character tries to convince him to go away." Make them role play it, and be sure to stay in character for your part! The importance of the GM remaining in character during PC interaction is discussed elsewhere, but it bears repeating: "You must portray your NPCs as realistically and truthfully as you expect your players to play their own characters!" After all, an NPC is, by definition, a character. It simply doesn't belong to one of the PCs. It belongs to you, and it should be as full fledged a personality as any PC.

3.6.2 BUILDING AN NPC

Of course, this is easier said than done. In fact, building a good NPC can be more time consuming and difficult (without a few shortcuts, discussed below) as building a normal PC. Many players design their characters as a set of statistics and impulses. They know *how* their character will act, but they don't always know why. You, as the GM, must be aware of why your NPCs react and respond the way they do, or you will not be able to maintain them as discrete and consistent personalities over the course of a game session, much less a campaign.

The best way to ensure your own understanding of the internal motivations of an NPC is to detail the background of the most important ones. This requires some work beforehand, although not as much as you might think. If you determine where an NPC is from, what profession he is, and a detailed description, you have done 80% of the work. The other 20% takes more time and thought. A useful set of rules for helping to flesh out an NPC is simply to ask the questions: What, when, why, where, how and who?

What are the Motivations of the NPC?

What goals does this person have? These goals should be in the interest of the story and the GM. You may wish to set the NPC's goals as the acquiring of great wealth and a noble spouse. Or temporal power. Or to get people to like him. Jot down a few ideas of what uses this NPC should serve, and come back later, after having answered some of the other questions. Don't forget such important uses as comic relief, misdirection and serendipity. Not every use must be to move the PCs in a desired direction, merely to move the story in a desired direction. An NPC's goal may be nothing more than to get to the tavern and have an ale. But know what the NPC is doing.

When Does the NPC Wish to Attain these Goals?

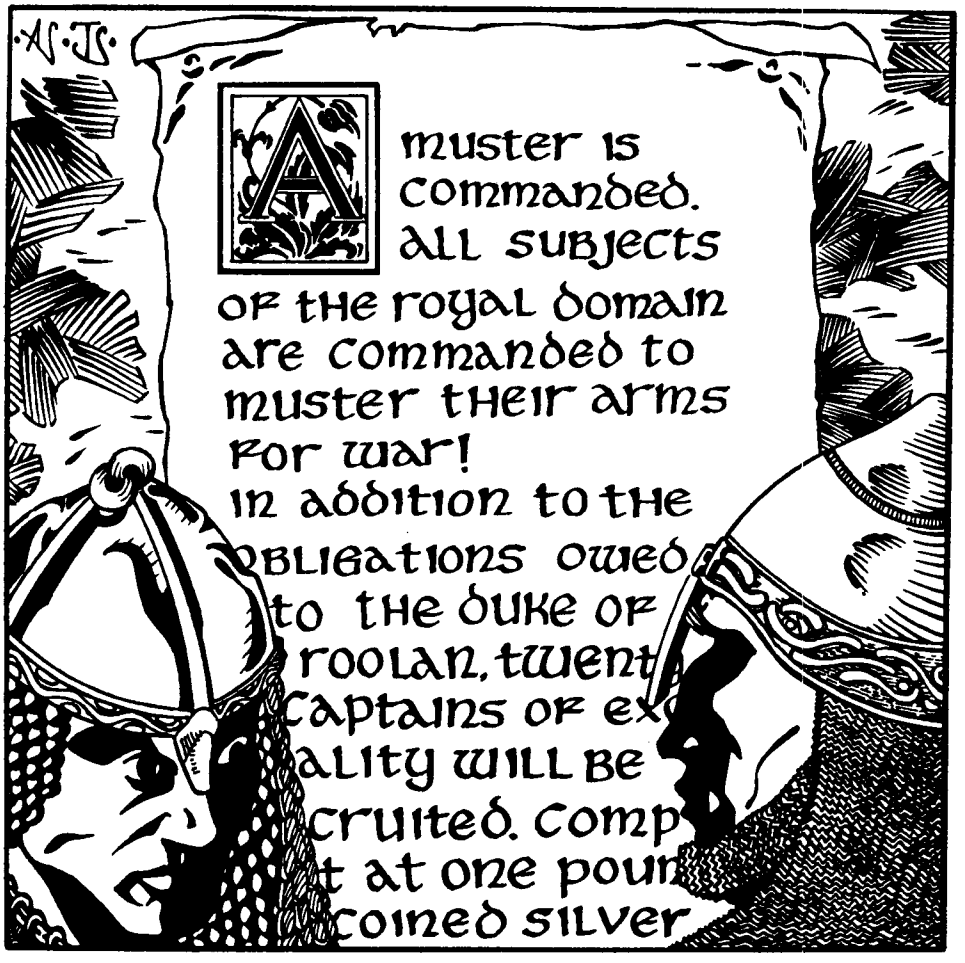
This probably a very easy question for most NPC, when you think about it. The usual answer will probably be "as soon as possible." But think carefully when the goals are larger than the ale at the inn. What if this NPC wishes to become the youngest general in the Imperial Army? What if this NPC wishes to foment a revolt among the slaves of the war galleys? Chances are this NPC has some sort of timetable for his schemes, and perhaps even a plan. Knowing when an NPC wishes his goals to come to fruition can help you not only plan out future game events, but foreshadow and drop clues much earlier than would be possible if the NPC were introduced on the spur of the moment. Knowing the agendas of your NPCs will also do worlds of good towards your own level of organization. As you begin to piece together timetables for your NPCs, you will discover that you are building time frames for your campaign. You must, of course, remain flexible in these plans, just as the NPCs would, but that is your prerogative as the GM. If you change an NPCs timetable in mid-campaign, who will know about it but yourself? As long as you avoid glaring inconsistencies, your players will be all the more impressed by your ability to run those incredible background machinations.

Why Does the NPC Wish to Accomplish These Goals?

This may seem, at first gloss, to be nearly the same question as the "What?" question. This delves a little deeper, though. Why does the NPC wish to accomplish such things? Why does the NPC wish to risk life and limb to lead a slave revolt? Why does this other NPC wish to turn traitor to his country and king? These are the prime motivations of the NPC, and they are vital to maintaining a consistent personality for your NPCs. Brief snippets of detail are sufficient, usually, as more can be layered on at later dates. But get the prime motivations clear. Did this person's father die at the oars of the Imperial slave galleys? Has a disfiguring disease driven friends and lovers from this person, so that he is desperate for companionship? Was this person raised in the House of Wachel, which vehemently opposes the present regime of upstart emperors? Place some internal drives within the NPC, and use them later when interacting with the PCs. You will find that the more you have fleshed out the NPC's own reasons for doing things, the easier it is to play him truthfully, and the easier it is to further develop him past a few simple and monolithic drives.

Where Is The NPC Attempting to Accomplish His Goals?

In the Imperial Palace. In the slave galleys. Easy answers but not what is needed to understand this question. The NPC has chosen a particular venue in which to move towards his goals for a reason, and you must know what that venue is. This question of "where" need not even refer to a physical locale, although it often does. Think instead of where this NPC can best accomplish his desires. For instance, the NPC leading the slave revolt may have chosen a particular ship to begin his revolutionary recruitment because that ship happens to house the newest, strongest and most discontented slaves in the fleet. Of course, it is no accident that this is the case, as the NPC has been bribing the slave foreman to quietly transfer all such slaves to this one ship. As another example, the NPC planning to turn traitor may believe that his best means of passing information is during the huge dances thrown by the king every month, and has an established drop point for passing information to the enemy agents. Perhaps it is as simple as the NPC wishes to get that ale at his favorite dive, the Limping Dog. But know the circles in which an NPC operates, so that you can devise a good reason to explain why and when they leave those circles, and what they do while they are within them.



How is the NPC Attempting to Accomplish These Goals?

By this time you've almost answered this question, if you've followed the steps above. Sometimes, however, this is the starting point for an NPC. You may need an NPC who will set the PCs inn on fire for some reason, and so you begin here and then move to the other questions. How: He is setting the inn on fire. Where: This particular inn, so therefore this inn either is embroiled in his discontent, or was chosen randomly... either one of these choices gives clues to the other questions. Why: He is angry at something. Perhaps he is the former owner of the inn, cheated out of his livelihood by the unscrupulous new owner. Or, perhaps he hates the PCs for some reason. The questions each give clues to the others, by channeling your creativity into explanations and detail.



The "How" of an NPC's goals can be the most complex part of building an NPC. If it is a long-term and elaborate plan, it could be a nightmare trying to detail every aspect of it. If you are so inclined, then go right ahead. Usually, however, it is sufficient to detail a few things the NPC has planned, a simple time frame and then work with it. You can be sure that things will have to change as the campaign continues, and you will have to revise the plans of the NPCs anyway. The simple truth is that it is fine for the GM to "fudge" these kinds of things, as long as the NPC does not receive a greater advantage than he should have had from the start. That last was potentially confusing, so an explanation is in order.

Most NPCs who initiate grand schemes have information that you, as the GM, may not have at present. For instance, the NPC may know all of the leading criminal elements, despite the fact that you have not yet detailed those elements. The NPC may know some hideous secret of the king's, even though you haven't yet decided what it is. This is fine, and as long as you maintain consistency as you go, you can fill in these blanks when necessary. What this means, however, is that you may need to retroactively rewrite an NPCs plan from the beginning more than once in a campaign, as details come to light. If you had planned to have the NPC hire a hitman to kill a particular noble, but later interaction with the PCs causes you to decide that the noble is actually working with the NPC, then you may have to go back and rethink the whole plan.. That's fine! Use the information given the players by the noble to keep consistency with events already related, but reshape the plan to account for the elements that have changed. Having changed your mind about the noble implies that the noble was in on the scheme all along, and the NPC would have accounted for that from the beginning.

And, of course, rewriting the plan (within the constraints set up by information gathered by the PCs in play) is a great way of creating those mastermind villains who are much better planners than you are yourself.

Who is Involved in the NPC's Goals?

The last question will explain why this NPC has come into contact with the PCs at all. The PCs may never meet this NPC, but will have regular contact with the lackey. In that case, obviously the lackey is involved, whether or not the lackey knows it. Your NPC may be using other people as tools just as you are using him. If so, then you need to position such tools just as you have positioned him. Or your NPC may have decided that the PCs can help him, in which case he will contact them directly. If you know what and how the goals are to be accomplished, then you will have a pretty good idea of who is necessary. For the revolt leader, the slaves, the slave foreman, and possible someone who can help him unshackle and arm the slaves. Is it outside help? A philanthropist? An enemy power? Sub-NPCs need not be fleshed out to the same degree as major NPCs if they will never come into contact with the PCs, but no one works in a vacuum. Be realistic with your NPCs, and they will be realistic to your players.

3.6.3 FINAL NPC TUNING

Finally, the NPC should be examined for integration of all of these aspects. One of the best ways to place the finishing touches on an NPC is the NPC Interview.

The NPC Interview

An extremely effective tool for designing NPCs and adventures is known as the NPC interview. Here you will take the role of one of the NPCs in your game and play him, while another NPC or PC (played also by you or better yet by another person) asks you questions. Try to provide a voice, accent, manner of speech, way of thinking, etc. as you play it out. Over the course of these questions, you will find detail flowing forth with much greater ease than you might think.

Ask (or have another) ask questions about the NPC, about the environment, about his impressions of the PCs, etc. Refer to the questions on motivation in the section on designing NPCs and ask variations on those. Try to establish in your mind the personalities and demeanor of all of the major NPCs in the story, where major is defined as those NPCs with whom the PCs will have the most contact, or the most vital contacts. For instance, the King may be a major figure in the setting, but the PCs will likely never meet him, or at most meet him once. Detailing the personality and demeanor of the King would certainly be useful and informative for designing and adjusting his effect upon the actual scope, but far greater priority should be placed on those NPCs who are going to directly and significantly impact the PCs.

3.7 CREATING CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

One of the most common reasons for game failure is poor character design. This is a particularly insidious problem because the GM may have a fantastic story and setting, with good players and the game *still* fails, simply because the character as designed does not mesh well with the story. If you are running a game that focuses on combat, your technical PCs may languish. If every NPC in the game can make mincemeat of the fighters in the group, they will soon become frustrated. When the players are frustrated the GM had better address the problem or the death throes will begin.

The GM can nip a number of potential problems in the bud by helping the PC design his character carefully. Depending upon the nature of your story, there are several methods of character development and inclusion available to you. Most players like having a significant amount of input in the design of their characters, but there are stories that require certain characters and skill sets. Tournament games and "prophecy" games are two examples of this. There are essentially three approaches to designing a character background, with varying levels of player input. These will be discussed later.

First, however, the important elements of character creation should be discussed.

3.7.1 THE CHARACTER CONCEPT

It is important, first of all, to understand the difference between a character concept and character generation. The character concept is a non-mechanical description of the character, including such things as character background, demeanor, description, personality, habits and other fundamental aspects of the character's general makeup. Character generation is the act of creating stats and skills for a character according to the character concept.

A character concept may be incredibly detailed or incredibly simple. In most cases, the more detailed the concept is the more opportunities there will be for role playing. Compare, for example, the concept of "fighter with a broadsword" with "noble warrior, son of an exiled baron. Armed with his father's sword, he nonetheless resents his father's loss of status and has abandoned his hereditary holdings and name in search of his own fame..." The differences here become multiplied with every added detail and character aspect added to the description.

In general, it is better if the character concept is well (if not fully) detailed before character generation begins. This provides two important benefits: the GM can render a preliminary judgement on the suitability of the character for the campaign and player tendencies to "work" the system can be minimized.

Preventing System Abuse

Some games (most notably those in which one "buys" skills and receives discounts or penalties to those costs for various combinations) have loopholes which allow players to generate unduly powerful starting characters. For example, a system may provide bonuses for stats. Those increases in these bonuses come at certain levels, and maximum efficiency would dictate buying statistics at these points rather than wasting another couple of points that will not gain an immediate advantage. When a player utilizes these loopholes to unfair advantage he is said to be "min-maxing."

This kind of mechanical manipulation of the game system largely ignores role playing. The player will instead attempt to create a background to match the "killer" character he has just designed. If the character concept is designed first, however, the generation will usually be more balanced, as the player makes selection based on the concept and not on the weaknesses of the system.

3.7.2 THE CAPSULE APPROACH

Most often used for tournament games and for highly thematic "prophecy" games, the capsule approach to character creation essentially means that the GM creates and writes the character in its entirety. Player input is minimal or nonexistent, and the character is usually highly tuned to the specific story to be played. The GM has complete freedom to include all necessary skills, attributes, traits, etc. to ensure that the PCs will have all of the tools necessary to explore and complete the story. The positive aspect of this method is that it is a good way to save time when gaming time is limited. In many games, and especially **Rolemaster**, character creation and tuning can take a long time, and the entire first session of play may be taken up entirely with these considerations. For one-shot stories and tournaments, the players will likely be satisfied with being handed an interesting and complete character, in order to get into play that much sooner. Other benefits include the ability of the GM to provide much more fully detailed story leverage and background information, and the character will, of course, fit well into the environment.

The negative side to this method, of course, is that the player may not like or identify with the character, and may grow bored or frustrated if the game runs very long. This approach is very domineering and should only be used in specialized circumstances. If this method is used, the GM should make sure that he has taken full advantages of the form, by including a thorough background, extensive story leverage, and other unique attributes to bring the character to life. Do not simply hand the player a sheet with stats and equipment and tell them "You are playing a Fighter." The player could have designed a Fighter in very little time and will resent the lack of effort invested. If the player is to be handed a character, make sure it is a full-bodied character that the player will be interested in exploring and bringing to life.

3.7.3 THE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

This is the most common approach to character design, wherein the player and the GM work together to create a character background. This may take the form of the GM asking endless questions to help the player decide what he wants, or it may take the form of a submission cycle wherein the player submits a character idea and the GM returns it with suggestions and ideas on how it might or might not fit in to the campaign and story. This process continues until both player and GM are satisfied with the result.

Be as flexible as you can with the player's ideas. If you have specified a particular race or profession that the character must be, then let the player add other details himself. If you have saddled the player with too many requirements, you might as well use the capsule approach and give the player a complete character.

Here is a good curriculum to follow to enhance the depth and role playing possibilities of a new character developed in collaboration with a player.

1. **Ask the player for a concept.** This does not mean a complete character with statistics, spells, skills and equipment. Ask the player to think of a few ideas of the kind of character he would like to play. A city guard? A mercenary? A scholar or mage? Perhaps a mercenary with ties to the underworld of a major city. Work with the player to pin down what sort of action he would like to engage in, and help him decide upon a type of character that would satisfy that desire.
2. **Ask the character for a physical description and general demeanor.** At this point you need to begin examining the concept for inclusion into your setting and/or story. Take a look at your own material and decide if there is a culture or locale in which this kind of character could develop. If there are several possibilities, then you are in luck. Describe them in brief to your player and give a few details about the areas from which this character might have come. If there is only one possibility, inform the player of the details of this option and see if it suits. If there are no possible locales for a character of this sort, then examine your setting for what is available and offer those options to the player. If the player agrees to modify the concept to conform to one of those options, then move on. If the player is unsatisfied with those possibilities, then inform the player that he needs to modify his concept or even start over, as a character of this type is not suitable for your setting. The player may balk, but you should stand firm. If the character cannot have developed in your setting then the character should not be there! You may have decided that there will be no Warrior/Mage type individuals in your world, where magic is for cloistered scholars and warfare is for trained soldiers. If the player wishes to play a fighting mage you may simply have to say no. Remember, integration of story and setting is critical to the success of the game, and if the player insists on being a maverick, you may have to put your foot down. [On the other hand, if you don't mind altering your setting at this stage to allow for the type of character the player desires, feel free, but be sure to go back and examine the changes and additions for their effect on the story and setting overall.]
3. **Help the player develop a suitable background.** [Remember, you still should not have discussed specific numbers yet. You are designing an individual, not a spreadsheet.] Having decided upon a place of origin, describe to the player where his character is from and some of the laws, customs and aspects of daily life in that region. Give the player some parameters for the development of the character (e.g., can the PC be of noble descent, weapons commonly used, etc.) and then have the player decide upon and describe a suitable background. This will likely be another submission cycle, as the player offers you possible ideas and you correct misconceptions the player may have about the setting. Eventually, the player should have developed a full fledged character background that is consistent with your setting and satisfactory to the player.
4. **Ask the player to detail a number of life episodes.** [Still no numbers.] Having a firm grasp now of the setting and background of the character, have the player flesh out some episodes in the character's life. Possibilities include: traumatic or enjoyable childhood moments, coming-of-age ceremonies, first kill, first love, happiest moment, saddest moment, scariest moment, best friend, worst enemy, selection for apprenticeship, life as an apprentice, graduation from apprenticeship, first time traveling, first combat, lovers or family, religious episodes... the list goes on. The focus should be on the reactions the character had at that moment. The player may do these in the form of descriptive passages, short stories or just discussions with the GM. The benefit of these, however, is to not only give the GM a chance to inform the player of how such events might have transpired, but to give the player a chance to more fully detail the personality of the character not only as it is at the start of play but as it developed. If the character as a child is radically different than the personality of the PC as originally conceived, ask the player to detail those events that brought about the change in outlook. The player may modify his original concept or may be inspired to detail other events that caused the character to change. The GM should try to avoid altering the details of these episodes whenever possible, but details of a mechanical nature (e.g., everyday items, rituals or the like) can be corrected and will give the player that much firmer a grasp on the history of the character. Be careful during this process, point out areas where the players are trying to make the PC "perfect." Encourage the player to build in interesting flaws and quirks, and reward the player for these details with story leverage based upon them.
5. **Have the player sit down with the history of the player and apply these concepts to the design of the character.** [Finally, we start applying numbers.] This is where this admittedly long process pays off. Players, having firmly planted their character concept in their minds, usually will not now "work the system" to create a "killer" character. By this time they have grown attached to the character and the specific history and will instead design this character to be true to the concept. If the character grew up with musical skills and other "nonessential" skills, the player will now be willing to spend the development points on them to meet the concept. Training packages will be selected not for their "efficiency" but for their congruence with

the history of the character. Stats will not be "min/maxed," they will be consistent with the strengths and weaknesses of the PC as he developed from childhood. Have the player show you the final version of the character and approve it or send it back for tweaking.

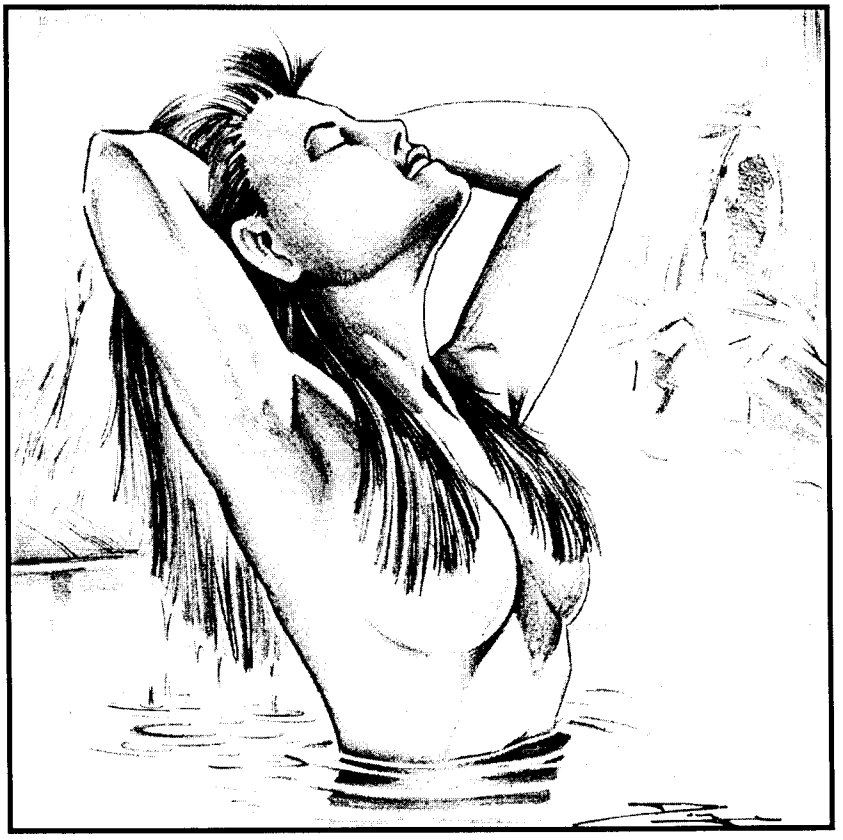
6. **Utilize the player's concepts and details whenever possible.** The player, while writing about the historical episodes of his character, will often include details about childhood ceremonies, everyday items and rituals, important persons in his past and more, in the interests of more fully fleshing the character. Encourage this! Give as much information as you can to the player before this process begins, and then give feedback on the suitability of the details. But whenever possible, utilize player-generated details in their entirety. Nicknames for parts of town, common foods, important NPCs and more can all spring from the minds of your players, and will give the player a feeling of having truly created a person, with attendant history and environment. Two minds are always better than one, and as long as the details do not conflict with your vision of your world, utilize the player for their own creative resources! Story leverage that comes from the player is *always* played better than leverage handed to the player by the GM. It is more familiar and easier to expand upon, and it is more fun for the player. When it is referenced, the player will immediately recognize it and act upon it. In one step you have not only brought the player into a closer connection with their character, you have doubled your creative resources *and* you have provided yourself with another means of story control.

Needless to say, not all GMs will be comfortable with this step, so consider carefully before you use it. It has enormous benefits if your setting and story concept will allow it, but it does require a certain amount of flexibility in your own design.

3.7.4 THE INCLUSIONARY APPROACH

The third approach to character design is at the opposite end of the spectrum from the capsule approach. Here the character designs the PC without minimal input from the GM and hands the GM a finished product. The GM then takes the material that the player has produced and incorporates it into his own setting and story. This is most often used in a free-form game, or when bringing a character from another game into the present one. It is also useful when working with a flexible setting and experienced role players. Often the player will come up with background ideas that the GM has not, and effectively the player is helping to flesh out the campaign setting before the game ever begins. This method is typically not suitable for a highly structured story or setting, as the player's ideas may conflict with the GM's. However, many novice GM's utilize this method (often unknowingly) primarily because they have not yet bothered to detail the setting to any significant degree in the first place.

Once a GM has some experience, and begins developing more structured stories, this method is often abandoned entirely. However, there are some significant benefits in utilizing it to a limited degree. When combined with the Collaborative approach, this method can provide the GM with valuable material, provide the player with a greater sense of connection to the character, and provide the story with a firmer grounding. Insert another step in the methodology listed in the section on the Collaborative approach.



3.7.5 THE CHARACTER AND THE STORY

Three brief maxims on the relationship of the character to the story:

The character only exists within the story that you, as the GM, creates. Obvious, right? Not always. When players and GMs work to create a character, sometimes it begins to seem that the character has a life of its own, independent of the campaign and story, perhaps by virtue of it being written on a piece of paper there on the table. However, that character will only get to act and react within the story you provide. This leads to another maxim...

The character will only exist in the story that you create if the player has him participate. Again, seemingly obvious, but a little more thought-provoking. But, of course, every player wants to participate in the story, right? Well...

The character will be unable to participate in the story without some means of contributing to it. Now, this is even more subtle. Surely this simply means that the player will have to have the character take an active role, helping to fight battles and solve puzzles, right? Wrong.

The characters in any story are there for a reason. Authors of novels do not design their own characters in random fashion, without any reason or means of participating in the plot. Characters are involved in stories because they have reason to be. They appear in and even dominate scenes because they have decisive abilities, information or involvement in the events of that scene. Certainly it is possible for a scene to be a random occurrence where the character plays a peripheral role, but no story is composed of an unending series of peripheral scenes. The characters have a share of most scenes in which they appear because they are involved in some way.

This concept is vital to a good story. Without a reason to participate, the players will be bored, the PCs will not pursue the story, and the game will stagnate and die.

Story Share

Story share means the character's involvement in a scene. When a character steps forward and delivers a stirring soliloquy to the villain, that character is taking story share. When the thief is trying to pick the lock, or the mage is casting the important ritual, or the fighter is holding the bandits at bay, they are taking story share. They are involved in the story. Story share can be the mundane, such as picking locks, or it can be grand, such as performing the coronation of the King. The key to the concept is that each scene is composed of elements, and if the character is a vital element of that scene, then they have obtained a share of the story.

It is important that you allow and encourage your players to reach for story share. If they do not, their characters will not participate. These players may enjoy watching others in the story, but they will not ever be a part of it. The tragedy is that some players do not always know how to obtain story share, especially when in a group of more aggressive and flamboyant players. The answer is to provide them with a unique portal into the story: story leverage.

Story Leverage

There are several ways to get story share. Some players are very capable of dominating any scene, through force of personality, or occasionally through remarkable volume. When a battle occurs, the warriors take story share by default, as they become the focus of the scene. During spell casting, the mages have focus. But these are mechanical situations for the most part, and if one player takes all of the story share all of the time, the others will quickly become resentful or bored.

Every PC needs to have a stake in the story, or it will be of little interest to the character *or* the player. In addition, every character should have information that only he possesses. This only makes sense. The individual background and experiences of the character will certainly have provided some sort of unique insights or knowledge. It is the GMs job to make sure that at least some of these experiences are pertinent to the story. These private elements are called story leverage. This leverage, applied at the proper time, will garner story share for the character during the session.

Story leverage does not mean that each PC should be given one of the necessary answers to a story question, but each character should be given some means of participating and contributing to the story. The leverage itself may have little direct application to the final resolution of the story, but if it *enhances* the story, and gives the character (and player) their moment to shine, then it has been properly handled. There are few greater satisfactions to any player than being the center of attention while performing some remarkable feat of knowledge or skill.

How To Create Story Leverage

Providing story leverage requires a knowledge of the story, or course, but more often it requires a knowledge of the campaign setting. Using the background and history of the PC is the easiest way to find story leverage ideas. Creating complete micro-stories for the purposes of leverage presents problems, in both masking and in continuity.

Examine the PC's origin - Does the story impact or is it affected by the PC's place and culture of origin? Perhaps the PC knows a language that no one else knows, or is familiar with an important location or city. Friends and acquaintances from childhood and on can be excellent sources of leverage, as the PCs will have "sources." If an NPC is from the same origin as the PC, the PC may have unique insights into the personality and motivations of the NPC. Take the time to detail with the player some episodes and details of the character's environment, and then remember to work it into the story later.

Examine the life experiences of the PC - The character must have been doing something prior to the beginning of the story. What is it? How has the character come to be involved in the story at this time? Don't just arbitrarily throw PCs together in a tavern and expect them to want to pursue your story goals. Give them questions, motivations, insights and responsibilities into aspects of the story that will make them *want* to pursue your story. Perhaps the bodyguard PC allowed a charge to be killed and is riven with guilt. Part of the story might give a peripheral clue to the killers. If the PC saw the killing take place, he might be able to recognize or track down the killers, who are involved in the story for utterly different reasons. The best stories do not simply throw themselves at the players... the players go out and discover that there *is* a story. But to accomplish this, you must give the PCs (and players) reasons to go and look for the story.

CAMPAIGN DESIGN

4.1 THE NATURE OF THE CAMPAIGN

A campaign is the backdrop against which a story is set. Usually, a campaign details such elements as geography, political boundaries, economic resources, races and populations, trade routes, magical or scientific advancements, and a host of other background details that provide the foundation over which you can build your story. For some GMs, the setting takes a back seat to the story, and the setting may reflect only as much detail as required to carry the story forward. Other GMs prefer to detail the campaign in copious detail before beginning work on story ideas. In general, Thematic games will focus almost entirely on story details, and Free-form games will draw heavily upon the resources of the campaign, weaving story elements into the setting.

4.1.1 CHOOSING YOUR STYLE

The creation of a campaign can be a labor of love, or it can be torturous. Some GMs love to work for hours on the fine details, lovingly drawing maps of countries, adding rivers and geographical features that are realistic and consistent in order to provide the PCs with a living, breathing world to explore. Stories flow naturally from these elaborate backgrounds, and the PCs are free to wander wherever they choose, with both GM and players secure in the knowledge that wherever they roam, there will be something there for them. This approach to campaign and story design is referred to as a bottom-up design.

On the other hand, some GMs feel that such depth in setting creation waste valuable creative energy in areas that will never affect the story. These GMs prefer to focus their attention on a seamless story, replete with powerful mood and effective pacing, and leave the background malleable in order to respond to story demands. The setting flows naturally from the story elements, with both GM and players secure in the knowledge that the story has purpose and direction. This approach to campaign and story design is referred to as a top-down design.

The Pros of Bottom-Up Design

Consistency—The long and arduous process of creating a detailed setting pays dividends in the depth and breadth of the background elements. Geographical features may be referred to with confidence, especially if the players should take it in their heads to visit them. Languages and political influences can be easily mapped onto the campaign map, making for more realistic interactions with NPCs of all kinds. In addition, such a framework is infinitely expandable. As you detail more and more of the setting through exploration by players and your own attention to areas that need work, you can effectively build upon previous work, and many elements seem to carry their own impetus. Races develop behaviors and patterns from previous examples, and the next time they are encountered, they respond consistent with their established *modus operandi*.

Endurance—Campaigns with extensive work invested in them tend to last longer, and indeed are far better suited to long-term gaming with the same PC group. Story ideas flow from previous adventures and players will want to search out areas that particularly interest them. Because stories are set against the background, players remain after a particular story ends. The GM always has several stories floating in the background, and often these stories weave themselves into the current story, planting seeds that will later blossom into new avenues of exploration by the PCs.

PC Creation—Characters created for long-term games tend to be far more self-sufficient than characters created for a specific story. Even the best role players have a temptation, in the one-shot story, to create a character that is a perfect cog in the party machine. This may be useful for the one-shot, but for long-term role playing and character exploration, it becomes tiresome quickly. Characters should be complete individuals unto themselves, with their own skills and means of subsistence. When a players realizes he is creating a character that will be in use for a long time, that character tends to be more balanced and identifiable to the player.

The Pros of Top-Down Design

Flexibility—These settings are not fixed, so they can respond to story demands with relative ease. If the GM needs to have a nation of dwarves in those mountains, then there it is. If it turns out that ten days to travel downriver is going to throw off the timing of the endgame, then the river is shorter, *voilá*! If everything is fluid, then the GM must be careful not to contradict previous judgments made to players, but his own structures can be flaunted with aplomb. This is especially useful in highly emotional and time-driven games, as the setting can be used as another malleable tool for evocation of the desired response in the players.

Intriguing PCs—As stated earlier, top-down is more often used for one-shot stories, and the PCs are often only used for the duration of that story. When this is so, players typically feel freer to play a personality or quirk that they could not tolerate if they were going to be using the PC for longer than the one adventure. Physical disabilities, weaknesses and aberrations are considered fun and challenging in the short run where they would be considered irritating and onerous in the long term.

Range—Some stories simply do not allow a lot of detailed preparation. Time travel, planar travel and the like make it difficult if not impossible for the GM to prepare more than a very few settings in advance. This does provide a greater range of possible environments, however. What is more, if the story is a one-shot, the GM is free to explore a wider range of radically different games and story concepts-a long-term campaign does narrow the range to stories that fit inside the established setting.

Obviously, the choice of design approaches is a personal one and one very much dependent upon your intended gaming style and story ideas. If you are having trouble deciding, you might wish to read the Section on **Story Design** to help clarify your thoughts as to your intent.



4.1.2 APPLYING THIS MATERIAL

If you are taking a Bottom-Up approach, then this material should be well-suited to your needs. This section, combined with Part II, Tangibles, will help you organize your thoughts and develop a complete world for your players. Provided within these covers is an outline for campaign building, helpful forms, ideas, and techniques, all designed to help you create a living, breathing world from scratch.

If you have chosen a Top-Down approach, then you will still benefit by reading this material. Even if your environment is to flow from necessity rather than preliminary work, you will still want to maintain at least the illusion of realism and consistency. The material herein can be applied moment by moment to improvised material just as it can in preparatory work.

4.2 STORY/CAMPAIGN DESIGN INTEGRATION

Part of the campaign design process must include attention to the story to be told within the setting. A campaign setting is an entire world, and to fully describe it would be impossible. Instead, areas of primary concern must be identified and described enough to provide a stable framework for improvisation and extrapolation.

4.2.1 IDENTIFYING VITAL ELEMENTS

Within each story there are certain elements that will be central to the story. These are the elements upon which you should focus the majority of your effort spent detailing your setting. These elements can include common settings or unusual people—anything that will draw a greater-than-average notice from the PCs.

PEOPLE

Identifying key people is not difficult, and most likely was already done in the NPC construction phase of designing your game. However, sometimes important personalities are not going to be personally active in the story but will nonetheless play an important role in the campaign. Some examples of such figures include:

Rulers and authorities—Kings, mayors, and other figures of authority need to be located within your setting. If the PCs will be confining their activities to a small region, it may be a relatively simple matter to place the Royal Palace, or the Town Hall or the Constable's office. Each of these individuals will affect the actual scope of the story and therefore the campaign setting. If their activities could affect the visible scope of the PCs, they should be detailed at least minimally.

Persons of Influence—Individuals without vested authority can still effect important changes on the campaign enviroment. Powerful mages, legendary warriors, reknowned sages and wealthy businessmen all provide clear examples of this sort of individual.

Other NPCs of the story—If an NPC plays a significant role in your story, try not to let him or her exist in a vacuum. Place the NPC geographically, and even locally if possible. The PCs may wish to follow the NPC home, for instance, and knowing the area beforehand can enhance the use and believability of that NPC.



Non-current NPCs—Another important aspect is to give some attention to the past figures of your gaming world. Ancient Kings, legendary beasts and fighters and ancestors of the PCs are all excellent tools for roleplay if they have been well placed and consistently utilized.

PLACES

Important places within your gaming world should receive the attention they deserve, as well. If the PCs are likely to wish to visit a location, you may wish to detail it. In addition, you may wish to detail a number of unusual locations to provide background material for the game session. For example, when an NPC is describing his country of origin, or when a sage is detailing the history of the region, having a concrete grasp of the locations in question will provide the GM with flavor and depth to his descriptions. The more material of this sort at ready disposal, the more creative resources are freed. Locations suitable for at least a brief description include:

National and Regional Boundaries—The borders and locations of major countries and provinces should be at least sketched out so that later in the game, when the PCs explore them, the GM has been able to maintain a consistent frame of reference.

Magical Phenomena—Unusual locations or effects should be charted as well. Reality warps, time faults, gates or enchanted pools and streams will all have stories and legends built around them (unless they are new, in which case you can slowly build the legends as the PCs continue through the story).

Special Resources—If a rare or valuable mineral or other material is found in a single or few locations, it might be good to sketch out some of those locations on the campaign map. Even if they are not placed, it is a good idea to at least determine names for these locations for future reference. Remember the importance of resources to political machinations of nations... placing these resources will help you to plot out the actual scope of your stories and campaign.

Events

Major campaign events and their locations should be detailed with care. If these events have a lasting effect on your story or setting, the particulars should be fixed in order to maintain consistency for PC inquiries. Possible events include:

War—Major wars can have massive repercussions upon a setting. Boundaries may change, cities and the very landscape may change or be destroyed, and of course the political landscape will alter significantly.

Past Phenomena—Magical events, past wars, an exodus of peoples, or anything that has affected the setting to some major degree.

Alliances and Political Maneuvering—In much the same way as the effect wars have upon the landscape, political events can have the same effect.

4.2.2 DETERMINING THE BOUNDARIES

After having compiled a list of all the events, locations, personalities and other story elements a GM may wish to detail, it is likely that to actually elaborate fully on every item would take years, rather than the weeks or even days available to a GM. The GM must choose what areas to flesh out and what areas to leave for later expansion.

The Limits of Detail

Remember the purpose for which you are doing all of this work. The entire reason for all preparatory work in a game is to provide a framework for consistency and to free up creative resources in session. The question is simply what will best accomplish this in the time available.

One might think, therefore, that the best method would be to sketch out in rough detail as many areas as possible, and improvise the details at the time of play. The problem with this, however, is that despite the consistency in overall details, fine details have been overlooked and must be thought up during play, and remembered for later use. These small details are important to building a scene and without them the scene takes on a detached quality. A few consistent and evocative details can bring the focus of a scene into a closer and more personal arena, so try to create a mix of broad and fine detail.

It is not necessary to detail the latest clothing fashions, but perhaps something distinct, like a special scarf worn by the nobility; instead of trying to create methods of architecture, diet, and social customs, try creating a few small details and dropping them into play every once in a while. These nuggets of detail will provide you with grains around which further improvisation can crystallize during play. Knowing that the clansmen often eat boiled lamb in thick sauces and mopped up with black bread is enough to help you improvise other similar dishes, should the need arise. Knowing that the Barouk greeting is a clenching gesture above the heart can lead you into all sorts of insights about the nature of the gesture (it is symbolic of the inner strength of the people, or perhaps it means that the greeter offers his heart into your grasp) and these insights can in turn lead to understanding about the people themselves. Never underestimate the power of a small detail.

The Core Area

Fortunately, a GM is not eternally having to create worlds from scratch. Most stories and PC groups center their activities around a relatively small area within the setting. This area is known as the Core Area. The core area becomes increasingly and regularly more detailed and complete as time goes on and detail fom sessions accumulates. Those small details become more familiar not only to the GM, but to the players as well, until they are anticipating and utilizing them. If a gaming group plays together long enough it may almost begin to feel like a shared world, as the players understand and recognize the various elements of the setting that they have explored for so long.

To the designing GM, a core area means that the boundary within which most of the preparation must take place is easier to define. If the story will be taking place within a relatively small region and will tend to discourage jaunts outside of that area then the GM can focus a lot of attention on the details of that area. Having a core area is a good idea for campaigns just beginning, because the focus on a smaller region gives the GM time to further detail the other areas before the PCs will have a chance to explore them

The Current Story

The current story should always take priority over general campaign development. But how far should one attempt to detail before beginning play? This depends on the amount of creative resources the GM is able to bring to the session.

Key NPCs—Decide which NPCs the PCs will definitely be meeting, and then decide which of those NPCs have major roles in the resolution of the story. Main antagonists, important arbitrators and NPCs who carry clues to the story resolution need to be detailed to the point where the GM will be able to provide identifiable differentiations between them (i.e., accent, demeanor, dress, etc.).

Key Locations—Sketch out the main locations of the story... taverns, residences being entered, caves being explored... whatever the story demands. If the exploration of a site is to be a major part of the story, then it should be defined and detailed.

Key Events—Detail the major events you have planned to move the story along. Determine beforehand the general manner in which these events are to unfold so that the details can easily be modified to account for PC activities. For example, if a kidnapping is central to the story, you might wish to detail the time, place and individuals involved just in case the PCs manage to arrive on the scene to interfere, or in case they manage to waylay one of the perpetrators.

4.2.3 WORKING FOR CONSISTENCY

Remember that the entire purpose of preparation is to maintain a consistent framework for your story. However, it is just as important that you be able to respond to session events and the changing environment of your story. To do so, you need to design your story and campaign with enough flexibility to allow modification for these purposes.

Story Mobility

Story mobility is simply the amount of flexibility the GM has in changing the people, events and locations associated with a story in order to suit the changing parameters of the environment of the PCs. Maintaining story mobility is really only a matter of being careful not to paint yourself into a corner. Since most of the story takes place within the visible scope, it may at times be challenging, but rarely impossible to alter the prime motivators of the story, and even flex the details that have not yet been observed by the PCs. Generally, the longer the PCs have been exploring a story, the less mobile the story will be. Events will have been irrevocably tied to certain individuals and locations, and enough of the actual scope of the story may have been glimpsed already that to tamper with the details would derail the rest of the story.

Be cautious when you utilize mechanisms that anchor your story before you are ready. If you think that the PCs may decide to leave the area soon, you may not wish to indicate that a particular story event will definitely occur in the near future, because then you will be tied to having that event actually occur. If the PCs have left the area, you will have wasted a viable story because it was not mobile enough to either await the PCs return or move with them to the new location.

4.3 BUILDING A WORLD

Part II, Tangibles holds a great deal of concise and informative material for building a campaign setting. This section will briefly touch upon each part and its role within this material.

4.3.1 USING CAMPAIGN LAW

Creation

The origin of your world may be immaterial to your stories, so this may not be as important to you as it would to another GM. If the gods and other higher beings are to play a significant role in your stories, then you should take the time to detail them now. These decisions may also affect how magic will operate in your world, and how accessible those forces are.

Note: *You should have a clear idea of the role you want magic to play in your setting. If magic is a rare commodity, used by scholars and advanced practitioners only, then there will likely be significant local effects, but little large-scale effect. Magic is a wild card that can unbalance an otherwise impeccably designed world, and you should be exceedingly careful with it.*



If magic is easily accessible to everyone and powerful in application, then the normal rules of cultural and individual development will often not apply. With the extensive use of magic, war changes completely, as does travel, learning, government, natural and unnatural events and more. Wide availability of magic can also make it difficult to keep the metabolism of a story under control (see Section 5.3).

It is recommended that even if you wish magic and magic users to be common in your game that you be cautious in controlling the application of that power, unless your story is specifically about such a magic-rich environment. This can be done by having all wizards and priests serve under powerful oaths of office or self-control, or by having other wiser magic users ready to swat those who abuse such power.

The Physical World

This section of material on geography and the forces of nature is excellent material in building a realistic world. Each of these features have endless story possibilities inherent to them, and you should make the most of them. In addition, this material can be highly useful in backtracking to the origins and explanations of a specific desired feature. For example, if you wish to have a volcano located in a particular locale, this material will describe what other elements are probably necessary to explain its presence (i.e. a geological plate shifting, a dome mountain that has unexpectedly broken through to the material underneath, etc.). A thorough knowledge of these basics will allow you to satisfy those players who enjoy catching the GM on little mistakes (rivers flowing the wrong way, etc.), even when detailing such things on-the-fly.

Climate

Climactic forces have always played a major role in history, and they should have an effect in your world as well. Temperature zones, major weather patterns, and prevailing winds are examples of simple details that will lend your setting verisimilitude. Consistency in these things are required, however, and you will find that a few moments spent on these factors will offer great help in setting a scene during your game. In addition, if your game requires a particular element, such as a jetstream or a major sea current from one area to another, you can more easily explain it and make it realistic by attention to these principles.

Vegetation

One area frequently left undeveloped by GMs is in the area of unique vegetation. **Rolemaster** has provided a wide variety of useful herbs and poisonous plants, and bestiaries can provide plants of monstrous nature, but ordinary vegetation is often overlooked. Consider creating a few new types of trees, perhaps particularly useful for a society. Perhaps there is a tree in the Northern Forests that grows particularly tall and straight, easily cured and perfect for longships. Perhaps there is a unique bush in the desert that can be harvested for water, food and even medicines. Perhaps the grass of the Western Steppes grows unusually tall, creating a veritable labyrinth stretching for hundreds of miles as people get lost within the stalks. Be careful to apply the basic rules of vegetation and climate, but be creative as well. An excellent way to give a ranger or animist an increased story leverage is to give them specific knowledge about various plants and animals beforehand that is unavailable to the other PCs.

Animals

The rules above apply equally to fauna. Create a new and interesting food animal, and some new predators-not monsters, mind you, just normal animals that prey on other animals. The guidelines given will help you to apply these new types and tune them to the environment, and you will often find that these new elements will present other ideas for stories, cultures and even new geographical features. For example, you may decide that a particular migratory herd animal is followed by a nomadic culture along its seasonal route, and at the end of the route there needs to be a rocky hillock area wherein the winter home of the culture is made, and all of the tribes will meet. Take such ideas and run with them, because they will lend a uniqueness to your world, rather than it just being another earth with magic and different terrain.

Monsters

Be careful with monsters. Magical beasts may be willing to sit in one place and wait for adventurers to come to them on a Quest of some kind, but most "monsters" are in fact animals of a dangerous or unusual nature. When this is the case, be sure that these creatures fit within the framework of their surroundings. Subsistence patterns, reproductive patterns and the like all need to make sense, or you are going to be left with what is essentially a large dungeoncrawl, in which disparate creatures wait patiently behind doors for PCs to encounter them, kill them and take their treasure.

When placing monsters within your setting, apply common sense, and as many of the rules for animals as you possibly can. Don't give a monster treasure if there isn't a likely reason for it. If you need a monster to be present in a certain locale, use the other rules in this section and appendix to detail logical terrain around it. And if the monster is intelligent, then be sure to give it credit for being so. Don't forget, intelligent monsters are NPCs, too.

Thinking Beings

This may well be one of the first things you detail in the creation of your world. If you know you are going to want elves, dwarves, humans, halflings, orcs and trolls, then you are going to need to place them logically within your setting. Races and cultures do not spring up from nothing and in the same area. Try turning the clock back from your mental conception of your world and decide where all these races originated. Did they descend from common ancestors and branch off from geographical and climactic influences? Was there magical interference? When you have sketched out a map of your campaign area, make several photocopies of it and make a series of maps showing the migration patterns and routes of conquest of the various races. One good method might be to start off with each race in their region of origin, and then draw arrows where they would be most likely to want to settle, and then determine where those desires conflict and what happens when they do. War? Coexistence? These maps and conflicts will also help you to later create the patterns of linguistic influence, if you so desire.

Cultures

Once again, if you are detailing your story first, many of these elements may already exist as requirements for particular cultures in your campaign. The elves may need to be warlike and expansionistic, the dwarves scholars and visionaries. On the other hand, you may have decided that you want to build realistic and unique cultures based on the environment in which they began. Either way, these sections can help you to determine the possibilities and influences affecting each society.

This section especially can seem quite intimidating to a GM trying to create a setting. The level of complexity and detail is vast when applied to an entire world of societies and cultures. Try using the Culture Creation Sheet to quickly jot down ideas for each category, and refer to these pages repeatedly when detailing neighboring or related cultures. If you have the time (and energy) you might want to do the same for ancient and vanished cultures before detailing newer and descended ones, as the information from the first will most certainly affect the later ones.

Realize also that the information presented in this book is necessarily limited in scope. The design and creation of cultures and settings would fill more than one supplement (and may in fact be forthcoming from I.C.E.), and space here does not allow a full discussion of all of the factors influencing such things. Further information can be gathered through libraries and such resources as *National Geographic*. Try studying other cultures through these sources and take those elements that intrigue you or seem to fit within your own cultures. By taking a variety of elements from a number of cultures from our own world, you can develop a blend that will seem exotic and unique to your players in your own setting.

Events

Political and natural events should be addressed at least briefly. Utilizing the information developed under the geographical and cultural sections, decide where campaign-wide events are occurring. Some examples include:

War—Are two nations traditional enemies? Are they in a constant state of smoldering warfare or are they in a pitched struggle for dominance? Don't forget that two nations may be having squabbles over a disputed territory, although neither is willing to go to war. Are the wars culturally or economically driven, or are they the result of one or more charismatic and influential rulers leading a nation into strife? These thoughts may lead you to detail several important individuals involved in the wars, from nobles and generals to noteworthy underground organizations and leaders. Also, rebels fighting a war of resistance is very interesting venue for story ideas.



Natural Disasters—Perhaps there are annual floods, as along the Nile, or perhaps they occur at random, devastating the countryside capriciously. Hurricanes are often overlooked, along with typhoons, tornadoes, and monsoons. Earthquakes may be an everyday minor occurrence in one country, and a tragedy of epic proportions in another, possibly leading to conflict. Don't forget about plains fires and forest fires. The most important facet of these situations is to account for the cultural and individual response to them. It may be that the entire Sylvan nation will take up to protect their forests from a raging fire, or it may be that a nomadic people will simply race ahead of the flames of a plains fire. For that matter, they may set one every five years.

Unnatural Disasters—This can range from incredible monsters capable of ravaging the land or a city, to the poisoning of a water supply by a rival nation or a madman. The possibilities here are legion, and again do not forget to account for the reaction of the people and governments involved.

Political Unifications and Alliances—Another sweeping change that may occur in your setting is the alliance or merging of large groups or nations. Perhaps two long-sundered groups of elves or dwarves have finally come to terms and are reunifying, with all of the attendant troubles and triumphs of that event. Perhaps two nations are merging through the marriage of their heirs and forming a new Empire. Perhaps a mighty war has ended and the loser has been absorbed by the victor. All of these events can be ongoing in your setting and generating a wealth of story material for you, as long as you detail and account for it.

Social/Religious Upheaval—Examine the possibility of a religious movement sweeping through an area, or perhaps there is a Renaissance of sorts occurring in a particular country. Perhaps a new ruler has banished slavery and the country is reeling under the change. Perhaps a deity or avatar has made an appearance and has made a call for followers. Large or small, the effects of social and religious events can be farther-reaching than they might appear, and will provide texture and depth to a campaign that might otherwise be in danger of seeming like a sea of homogenous races.

After you have decided upon a few events, applying them in their appropriate areas, take a few more moments and draft a few thoughts from the people who have been affected. The political and religious leaders, the common person, the traveler through the country...write down their impressions of the country and its situation. For example, a traveler might say, "Aye, the land of Jeyaba has met hard times in recent years, with the flood coming so soon after the marriage of young Princess Camille. The people have taken to it as a bad omen, and relations between Jaspek and Andrun have fallen to squabbles. I'd not mind visiting Jeyaba, as the people there are kind as a rule, and hospitable to strangers... but I'd not enter from the Andrun border, alliance or no." Little fragments like this can provide the GM with two things: quick and ready information for persons met on the road towards or within a particular country, and a more visceral feel for the atmosphere of a nation and culture.

4.3.2 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

After you have laid a foundation for yourself, with geography, climate, cultures, races and major current events, there are a number of other areas to consider.

Magical Institutions

If magic is widely available in your setting, then there may be a plethora of magical institutions. Publicly recognized guilds may have wizards for hire in major cities, and every village may have a Medicine Mother or Healer. In such cases, you may simply scatter magical institutions around with the same nonchalance that you place a Baker's Guild or a cobbler, even.

If, on the other hand, magic is a rare and powerful commodity, then magical institutions may be few and far between, and feared even then. Magicians are rarely born, they are usually made, and someone had to train them. If the common man fears and hates overt and powerful magic, it may not be possible for you to place a Wizards' Guild in the major city, and it may be difficult for PCs to find materials for advancement in level. If this is the situation with your campaign you may want to place magical institutions within your setting.

A magical institution is a broad term covering a wide variety of possible groups. There may be a hidden Council of Wizards or it may be scattered monasteries that teach different schools of magic in inaccessible locales. There may be a known central school of magic to which all wizards apply, difficult to gain entrance into and harder yet to graduate from.

In addition these institutions may not be for the learning and teaching of magic at all. An institution may be dedicated to the destruction of magic, or it may simply be a group of Ancient Powers that cloister themselves and may occasionally hear petitions for information and prophecies.

These groups can allow you to introduce magic into your campaign without having to make magic accessible to all. In addition, a mysterious group dedicated to the study and application of magic holds reams of story material for a GM.

Special Locations

You may also want to include special or unusual features of the land or sea as well. Perhaps there is a permanent whirlpool off the coast or a major island, or a lonely mountain in the middle of a vast plain, like Devil's Tower. Edifices and artifacts from long-dead civilizations may be included in this section, as well as tar pits, meteor craters and the like. Special details like this are valuable, and the GM should take a few moments to think about what sorts he might like to include in his setting.

Subcultures

Never forget that almost no society is completely homogenous. Subcultures marble the pattern of a society, and your cultures should attempt to reflect some of the diversity of our own. Obviously, one cannot generate every minor detail of a social group, but you can make a quick start by considering groups from other nationalities within your cultures. People move, borders change, and entire groups from one country may now be living in another. Having detailed many of the aspects of another culture, consider briefly how this background might color thinking and behavior when they are transplanted to another country. Don't make it easy for players to pigeonhole entire nations of people by one individual example. Overlap cultural boundaries, create counterculture movements and the like and you will reflect a more accurate representation of a true society.

At the same time, of course, if a society is at a subsistence level, there will likely be little energy left over for elaborate countercultures. Remember that free time is a decisive factor in many social movements, and if there is little leisure time available to a class of people, there is a commensurate lack of such movements. Religious movements are a different story, but they do not fall under this category.

4.3.3 TUNING TO THE STORY

If you have been designing your setting based upon your story, then this section may be of little application to you. If you have been designing your setting first, however, it is time to address the need to tune to your story. Keep track of what information you have given your players. Consistency and adherence to your material is fine, to a point, but you need to remain flexible. In building your initial (or later) stories, you may decide that you need a particular race, culture, location, or feature to properly develop your setting. Be careful, especially if you have built your setting up in great detail, that you don't destroy the consistency of your material, but don't be afraid to modify your material to enhance your story. Remember, your setting is a tool to enhance the telling of your stories, not vice versa. If an element needs to change, and it won't conflict with information already given to the players, then change it! This may seem obvious, but many GMs are hesitant to do so, simply because they feel that their creation has become an inviolate work through the hours invested. Never let your work solidify in this fashion. It is flexibility and change that will most improve your stories and settings.

Often a story develops out of setting material or player material. These situations usually require little tuning. It is when the GM has had a unique story idea and wishes to integrate it into his current setting that this tuning process must be undergone.

Locations and Features

Your story may require a particular type of setting to work properly. If there is a suitable location to place the story (and you should keep your possibilities in mind as you design your stories), then all is well and you can move on to the next step. If it is sufficiently exotic, you may need to set it off your main campaign map (after all, few GMs have time to detail their entire world-instead they focus on a continent or the core area for gaming). If it is truly exotic, and unlikely to fit within your world at all, you may have to set it on another world or plane of existence, and that is beyond the scope of this discussion. In such cases, you simply dictate what you require and run with it.

If you need it to be in your campaign setting, however, and there doesn't seem to be a suitable location, there are a few alternatives.



Change the details—Alter small details to make the story fit the setting. Perhaps icefields can become tundras (or even deserts-if the requirement is that the environment be barren and hostile, either will do. Is it the cold the story requires, or the climactic extreme that drives this aspect of the story?) and oceans can become vast inland lakes.

Change the setting—If you require a specific group of people, and they do not fit within the standard cultures, can they exist as a subculture? A counterculture? An isolated group in a relatively inaccessible region? Be creative, because it is important that your setting and story mesh seamlessly. If you must, change your setting, but examine all of your options first. Small changes are easy to fit into the whole, but large changes disrupt the patterns of your campaign, and make it difficult for you to maintain consistency.

Run a minigame—As a last resort, if the story and setting just cannot be reconciled, then run the story as a one-shot adventure. You can go to the trouble of shooting the characters through time, across the world or to alternate planes, or you can just tell your players that they're going to run their usual characters through a different setting and story. Dream sequences are handy here....

Mechanics and Design Decisions

What happens when the story utilizes a magic-rich environment and your setting is magic-poor? Or vice versa? What if you need gunpowder to work this once but you don't want to introduce it over the long term into your game? These situations would ordinarily call for a one-shot adventure, but players often want to use their existing characters. Here are a few ideas for how to handle these situations:

Time travel—Place the adventure in the distant past or future and shift the PCs there. Often this can be a fascinating mechanism if not overused, and can allow you to explain to players how past events have shaped their character's world. Perhaps in the past magic was prevalent and dangerous, and the Powers That Be sought to bring it under control. Or perhaps in the future magic is gone and gunpowder works at last. Perhaps something has happened in the past to alter the present, and only the PCs know it. They must, of course, travel back to the event and set things right.

Saving the world—If a particular mechanic needs to be different for the length of the story, incorporate it into the story itself. If the story is on a large scale, then it may be that the "villain" has altered the rules of magic through a powerful artifact or ritual, and it is up to the PCs to fix things. Be careful! This sort of thing can throw the metabolism of a game into an uncontrollable upward spiral! Unless this is the culmination (and end!) of the game, you will want to make it painfully clear that the PCs are simply in the right place and the right time to solve the crisis. You will be increasing the scope of the story to a drastic degree if you use this method.

Dreams and visions—This will only seem like a cop-out if you allow it to seem that way. Having full adventures while a character is in a dream can be an effective tool for conveying important information, communicating with deities or handling shaman and seer characters. Not all stories lend themselves to this method, however.

The Best Method

In general, these kinds of machinations are a last resort. The best method of tuning a story to your campaign is to have designed the story with the setting in mind. If it is an existing setting, then you know what you have to work with. If it is not, then you know what you need to create. Some story ideas simply won't mesh with your existing material and you should probably try to utilize the story idea in a piecemeal fashion, incorporating the interesting parts into other stories, before you go about altering settings and timelines just to get to use one intriguing story idea.

4.4 CREATING SPECIFIC SETTINGS

At times you will want to run a game or story in the setting of your favorite book, movie or television show. The obvious benefits are a familiarity with the setting (possibly shared by all), a quick start, and the excitement of getting to take part in that favorite environment. The disadvantages are the need to remain consistent with the concept, the special requirements the setting may have that conflict with game mechanics (i.e., radically different systems of magic, etc.), and the fact that players may occassionally know more about the setting than you do yourself.

4.4.1 GATHERING THE CONCEPTS

Having decided to utilize a specific setting, however, you should address those issues that are unique to the setting, to ensure that you will be able to account for them smoothly within the session.

Special Rules Changes

The most obvious problem will arise when the mechanics of the setting conflict with the mechanics of the game system your group uses. Occasionally this can be overcome by utilizing a different system, or with minor adjustments to the present system. Sometimes, however, the differences are too large. Magic systems (and psionics) are the most common areas of conflict, a problem which translates into technology conflicts in a modern or futuristic setting. If vast powers are easily available to the PCs, it may be hard to control the metabolism of the game. However, if everyone has access to these abilities, this problem may become self-regulating. An excellent example can be found in the very high technology of *Star Trek*. With matter conversion and alteration, unlimited food, extremely powerful weapons and very fast travel available to all, the conflicts in the story often become personal ones, or situations in which those luxuries have been taken away for some reason.

But when the problem is not availability but the mechanism by which that element is employed, one must look carefully at how to handle it. If the group's game system can be used to simulate an effect, it should be allowed to do so.



Example: *Magic is used through complex rituals rather than convenient and fast spells. Solution: Use the same spells, but increase the casting time and require that each spell be performed as a ritual casting. This may mean that low-level spells are dropped as not being worth the effort. But the system is perfectly capable of simulating the mechanic.*

If, however, the game system is fundamentally unable to handle the mechanic, then you must either invent a new system, use a system from another game, or tell the players that that characteristic of the setting will not be the case in the game.

Example: *Magic is performed by chanting simple rhymes. Any effect can be created if a rhyme can be made to invoke it. Solution: Almost no game system will support this. Either drop mechanics entirely and have the players roleplay it, or use your present system and tell the players that the system has been changed from the one in the original setting.*

Special Locations

This is fairly straightforward. Often a particular setting has special locations and people in it, and at times these settings are enormously detailed. At times, however, such things are only referenced, and vaguely at that. Bear in mind that if you use a setting with which the players are familiar, they are probably going to want to get to see the exciting locations and setting elements that they remember, and their PCs may find excuses to do so (not entirely truthful roleplaying, but who wouldn't want to go see the Emerald City if one were in Oz?). Anticipate this and prepare these elements beforehand, or else prepare reasons why these elements are not available.

The Dependence Upon the Story

In general, specific settings are very dependent upon the story which is to take place within them. Only rarely does an author design a setting first and then go find stories within it. Usually the setting has been designed to accomodate and enhance the story the author wishes to tell. The benefit of this is that it makes a good story. The disadvantage is that other stories may not mesh as well with the setting.

In general, specific settings must have stories designed for them which take advantage of the same aspects that the original story did. Not the same characters, NPCs or even locations, mind you, but the same aspects. An aspect is a unique trait or feature of a setting that creates the flavor of that setting. It may be the magic, or the nature of the struggle between Darkness and Light, or perhaps the type of people who inhabit the setting. But to capture the same flavor that initially drew you to the setting, you must utilize those same aspects that first provided that flavor. There is no sense in utilizing a unique and possibly restrictive setting in order to run a game that could take place anywhere. You have tied one hand behind your back without receiving any benefit. Identify those elements of the story that epitomize the setting, and develop a story that takes advantage of them.

4.4.2 BREAKING THE RULES

When it has become plain that some of the rules of the game system are simply not going to support the style of play that you wish to achieve within a specific setting, you are going to have to break, or even discard, the rules. If the discrepancies are small, this may not be a problem. Simply change the small details and go on with the game. But when the discrepancies are large, the problem of maintaining game balance and consistency loom very large, indeed.

In general, if the game is to be a one-shot adventure in a specific setting, these considerations may not be important. It is only when the setting is to be the campaign for a series of ongoing stories that one must consider the effect upon metabolism, balance and consistency.



Determining the Need for Consistency

If the setting indicates some unknown regulating factor in the mechanic in question, then you are going to have to explicitly define that regulating factor for your players (and yourself). As stated before, players will take up every inch of slack you hand them, so be careful what you hand them. If the most powerful mages in the setting rarely summon up more power than that needed to light a campfire or make a light, then you need to be sure that whatever restriction is binding upon them binds equally upon the characters. Otherwise, your story is not going to remain consistent with the setting, as the players reach far beyond the intended scope.

Changing the Definition of Consistency

However, it may be that the very nature of the setting demands the imbalance. If the setting demands that all mages possess vast power for little effort, then the adjustments you make will probably need to be in the stories you create, not in the game system. You will have to make stories that account for that factor, and the conflicts will of necessity reside in different areas. It may be that the stories will address the abuse of such power, or the danger of overuse. If the PCs can effect vast powers, but using those powers kills them slowly (or quickly), then they may reconsider such abuse if they plan to play the character for very long. In this case, consistency is maintained by the setting itself.



STORY PROGRESSION

Just as important as the initial design of the story is maintaining the story after it has begun. If the GM has developed his story keeping in mind the ideas presented in Section 3.0, Story Design, then he should find the maintenance and update of his story a much simpler task than he would otherwise. The art of story maintenance is essentially knowing when and how to reapply the principles of story design to his current story.

5.1 TRACKING SESSION EVENTS

Before you can maintain and progress the story, you need to understand how to examine your current events. Every session will produce new, unexpected results and events that must be reconciled with the story and setting overall, and there are several areas of which you must be aware.

5.1.1 RECORDING THE SESSION

First the GM must ensure that he will be able to remember and consider everything that has occurred and changed in your story while in session. This can range from simply jotting down notes to actually tape recording the entire game session. There are advantages and disadvantages to each method, however, and he will have to choose one that suits his style.

Memory

There are GMs who have such infallible and prodigious memories that they can recall nearly every pertinent detail that escaped their lips over the course of a six-hour game session. If you know that you are one of these wonders, rejoice! For the average GM, memory is capricious at best. Consider other methods if possible, because things will be missed.

Benefits—Speed, both during the session and after. The GM need not stop to jot down notes or change tapes during critical scenes.

Disadvantages—Accuracy and completeness. The GM is going to forget specific details, from new NPC names to just how much information was related to a PC during a conversation.

Work Around—Such errors can be fudged later, or even resolved by asking the players. Discussing the session with the players afterwards can often provide nudges to the GM's memory (which should then be written down immediately!).

Notes

This is the most common solution to this problem. The GM keeps a small notebook nearby, or perhaps writes directly on the pre-prepared material, recording important new information and story ideas as they occur.

Benefits—Moderate speed, although problems may arise when the GM cannot afford to stop and jot notes when the mood and pacing of the scene may suffer for it. Accuracy is higher than with memory alone, although many "obvious" notes will later become cryptic scrawls seemingly unrelated to anything (e.g., "NPC–stable/jump"). Try not to be so terse that there is no content.

Disadvantages—Time and effort required during session. Some GMs will end up with indecipherable notes that are as confusing. Difficulty maintaining notes through tense and fast-moving scenes. Accuracy is moderate.

Work Around—Again, the players are a good resource. Usually every group will have at least one player who writes down everything that is said and done in a session. Ask to see that person's notes and look them over, possibly even photocopying them. Develop a shorthand or a notes sheet so that note taking will be faster and more reliable. Keep NPC sheets handy to mark changes and information gleaned or delivered directly on them.

Tape

Tape recording is certainly the next best thing to having a secretary transcribe the entire session. Some GM styles may preclude this option, and dealing with six or seven full tapes after every session can be intimidating.

Benefits—Accuracy, first and foremost. Assuming that the tape was changed regularly, there will be a complete record of everything that took place during the session. In addition, there will finally be a record of all of the wonderfully funny or moving moments in the game that you later will wish was on videotape.

Disadvantages—Convenience, or the lack thereof. Every session will produce multiple tapes, each of which may be filled with a distressing amount of non-game related material (pizza orders, latest TV episode, jokes, discussions about hilt wrappings...). It may also be difficult to pick out everyone's voice accurately, especially if other sounds get in the way. GMs who provide a soundtrack to their game sessions may find this method unworkable. Finally, the time investment required to go over six or seven session tapes may become prohibitive, especially if the group meets often.

Work Around—Get help by handing each player a tape and having that player transcribe it by next session (or earlier, if possible). Some GMs (and even game systems) give extra experience for players willing to do this sort of work, and it is certainly fun for all (as well as informative) to get a complete transcript of every session to enjoy all over again.

Whatever method you choose, find some way to keep up with current events in your game sessions. You will rapidly lose control of the story and campaign if you cannot ever remember what is happening long enough to account for it.

5.1.2 EXAMINING PLAYER REACTIONS

As important as recording the events of the session is to be aware of the reactions of the players during a session. Remember, if the players are not having fun, then the game is not successful! There are a number of things that need to be examined in gauging player reactions.



Participation

This is one of the most important gauges of player enjoyment. If a player is leaned back in his seat, doodling on his character sheet, there is something wrong. Some players enjoy standing back and remaining quiet until it is time to step in with a word of wisdom or carefully considered deduction, but these players are just as easy to spot. They will avidly watch and even record everything around them, and you will know that they are following the story closely when they do reenter the scene. But the bored player situation must be addressed. Consider the session:

Were all of the players involved? One expects occasional distractions and side discussions as real life intrudes now and again during the session, but in general, did everyone maintain an interest in the story and situations? If not, you need to look at what lagged, and where player participation dropped off. It may be that you need to move more quickly in such scenes, but it may also be that you need to find elements to engage the PCs of the bored players more fully.

Did all of the PCs have something to do? This is one of the most common reasons for players becoming bored during a session. If the entire story involves combat, the thief-types may have nothing to do for most of the session. Make sure that your story includes something for each PC, and story leverage is perhaps the best way to do so.

Did the story move forward? Many GMs like to let their players do as they please, exploring those things which interest them and ignoring those which don't. But the GM should still have stories available to the characters, and the PCs should always be involved in one at present. If the PCs have just returned from an extended adventure and just want to rest and provision, make a story out of it. Show the PCs some of the events that have occurred in their absence; engage the PCs in conversation with the innkeeper, or the city watch, or the street people. Don't let the session wander aimlessly, even if the characters are doing so.

Enjoyment

This is difficult to gauge through observation, sometimes. However, one can often tell through the level of participation of the player; the amount of role playing (as opposed to gaming, wherein one simply describes what the character is saying or doing, rather than role playing the part); and just the level of energy evident from the player. Be aware of this, because you may be having the time of your life, but your players may be bored to tears.

On the other hand, they may have loved what you expected to be the most unenjoyable part of the session.

Feedback

Ask your players. If they enjoyed themselves, they will be effusive in their praise. If they did not, then it is precisely what you need to hear. Ask them what they did not enjoy, and why. Ask them also what their favorite parts of the session were, and if they felt that enough time was spent on those areas. Take their responses seriously. Their advice will almost always be useful, if you ask it seriously and with the intent of acting upon it.



5.1.3 EXAMINING PERSONAL REACTIONS

Just as important as player reactions are your own. After all, you will remain unsuccessful as a GM if you do not please your players, but you also remain successful if you do not please yourself. And this does not mean whether or not you felt that you were perfect. This refers to whether or not you enjoyed yourself, and whether or not you felt that you tried your best.

Enjoyment

Did you enjoy yourself? Why or why not? If unsatisfactory areas were from unfamiliarity or dissatisfaction with the way you handled rules or events, then these areas are fixable through a greater attention to these details in preparation.

If these areas were because you felt that certain areas were too boring, or took too long, you need to look at your presentation and pacing. Identify and target these areas so that when you come to them next time, you will be aware of the need to either add energy to the scene, or push the scene forward more quickly.

Finally, if you were simply unsatisfied with the session in general, then it may be indicative of one or more of several problems. It may be that the story or setting are not as suitable as you had thought, and you might need to either rework or even abandon them rather than waste more time pursuing an unsatisfactory concept. It may be that the group with which you are playing is not one that will work well within the game system, setting or particular story. Or

it may even be that you need to gain more familiarity with the system, story or setting before you attempt it. This is a common problem for new GMs. This does not mean you should abandon your attempts, but you might want to try a simpler or more familiar setting before trying to break too much new ground.

Focus

This is usually more of a problem with GMs who have enjoyed themselves immensely in a session. It may be that the GM loves combat, and had innumerable battles while some of the players sat back and sighed. Or it may be that the GM enjoys playing a particular NPC and the session tends to linger too long during such scenes. Examine your own foci within a setting and determine if they enhanced the story or not. If they did not, then you should place a mental warning flag for such situations to be careful not to let your own excitement and enjoyment bias the story.

On the other hand, those areas which excite and please the GM are most often the areas in which he will invest a great deal of energy and interest, and that in turn tends to stimulate player interest and enjoyment. You need not be fearful of abusing all of the areas you love best, but you should be careful when the focus begins to noticeably shift towards those elements.

5.1.4 EXAMINING STORY SUCCESS

Next, you should take a hard look at the story and the degree to which it was effective. It is very possible for a session to go extremely well but for the story to fail completely. Extraordinary players or an extraordinary GM can overcome remarkable shortcomings in story and setting through sheer energy and role playing ability. This is obviously an unreliable way to achieve good results in a session. However, you need to examine the story after each session to determine how effective it was within the context of the session, so that you will be able to better address those areas in which it failed to meet your expectations.

Enjoyment

This does not ask if the characters had fun (the PCs may have been set upon at every turn), but rather if the story was enjoyable to the players and yourself. Did the story itself provide interesting or exciting avenues for exploration? To what degree was the story responsible for the enjoyment of all within the session (or the lack thereof)? A good story will have provided everyone with at least one or two moments in which they were totally connected with their characters and highly involved in the events of the story itself. If you or your players come away from a session feeling that the story "hadn't gone anywhere" (or worse, had gotten in the way), then you need to reexamine your story from the ground up.

Planning

Take a look at the success of your planning for the session. Did you correctly identify the areas that required detailing? If you had guessed that the players would stay in town for a few days and had not provided for their subsequent desire to travel cross-country instead, you need to be sure to register the fact for future session preparation. Players will usually show trends in what interests them and what does not. You may discover that your players don't like wandering around extraneous locations provided by the GM, preferring instead to pursue relentlessly the elements of the story, wherever they lead. If so, use this! Create more focused story elements to direct the players to areas of your choosing by virtue of the fact that your players will follow such leads willingly (as opposed to having to force them in certain directions).

The Nature of Surprise

It is the very nature of surprise that you cannot predict it. You can, however, prepare for it. Your players will always do things during a session that you do not expect. It is the old story of the anthropologists who lock a gorilla in a room with a banana suspended from the ceiling, with four methods provided for the gorilla to reach the banana. With anthropologists eagerly looking on to see which of the four methods the gorilla will choose, the gorilla promptly finds a fifth way and sits down to enjoy his lunch. Players are exactly the same. Give them ten different interesting areas and story elements, and the players will often decide upon a course of action unrelated to any of them. This can be frustrating when a great deal of effort and thought have been poured into the preparation of the story, but it can and will happen a significant fraction of the time. Fortunately, you will begin to get a feel for your players after a while, and predicting their behavior will become easier and more reliable.

In addition, there are several things to look for during story preparation that will help you at any time to decide what areas of the story to prepare.

In media res—("in the middle of things") This is one of the "safest" times for the GM in terms of accurately predicting those areas in which the PCs will take an interest. If they ended the last session sneaking around in the governor's mansion, they will certainly be doing so when the next session begins. Take a look at where the PCs are in the story. If events are particularly demanding at this point in the story, then you can usually safely predict the interests, if not the actions of the PCs. They will usually deal with those demanding elements before proceeding upon their own agenda.

Player versus PC—If your players are good role players, they will try to be true to the interests and motivations of the character rather than to their own. This is difficult at times. At times, a player may immediately realize that a particular story element holds a valuable clue to the resolution of the story, but knows that his character would not recognize that fact as well. The better role player will not utilize out-of-character knowledge when playing his character. However, whether he does or not can provide you with a clue of how to prepare. If the player always pursues his own interests, then you can learn to recognize them and even play upon them, providing clues and story elements that target that player's interests. If the PC's motivations come first, then you can target those same motivations and further the story with the help of the player! Try to encourage this behavior in your PCs. It can be frustrating to let a clue slip by because the character would not spot it, but the player who does so almost always derives a certain satisfaction in having been true to the character, and having given the story another level of depth and realism thereby.

5.2 INTEGRATING SESSION EVENTS

Once you have evaluated the overall success of the story and session, you need to update the story to account for those changes effected by the group during the session.

5.2.1 MAINTAINING THE STORY CHRONOLOGY

Even if you do not attempt to chart out events into the future of the story, you should certainly keep a log of past events. Invariably questions will arise as to how long it has been since something occurred, or you will need to determine whether a message could have traveled a given distance in a given time. A chronology is an invaluable aid in these matters, if for no other reason than it is so easy to forget details when the time between game sessions is long.

When using the chronology during the session, try to be as brief as possible so that you will not break the flow and pacing of the session. Then return immediately after the session and expand on what you said. If something seems particularly volatile and you fear for your ability to remember it until session's end, then go ahead and take the time for a more detailed note, but never attempt to capture everything at the time it happens. Keep your players moving, and try to write these things down during PC-to-PC conversations and the like, when your input is minimized anyway.

What Matters

The most important things to include in a chronology are those events which depend upon timing. This can include messages sent to faraway places, the arrival of expeditions or caravans, or any number of events that strictly require a minimum amount of time to complete. Knowing the current status of such things means greater consistency and realism in determining the future status. Don't forget that many such story elements can remain not fixed until such time as the PCs begin to closely examine them, at which time you will need to pin down the details and remain consistent with them.

You should also try to include important story information disclosed to or by NPCs in your chronology. Very often it will be important whether and when certain information has been imparted, and most GMs' memories are not up to the task.

By jotting down notes on the activities of the PCs, you will having a running index to the activities of the campaign. Later, when updating your campaign, story or designing new stories, you will be able to glance back at the recent or distant events and decide which elements should resurface. In addition, you will be able to better assign experience with accurate records of what has happened when.

Finally, it is fun to be able to look back at the activities of your campaign and see the evolution of your story and players. Sharing these records with your players can be the best part of ending a story or campaign, as great moments and the highlights of the story are triggered in memory again. (You might even want to record some of the best out-of-character jokes and one-liners.)

What Doesn't

You do not need to try to maintain a chronology of every strike in combat, every critical delivered, every spell cast. These tasks are far too time-consuming and rather pointless. Only record information that you will need later on. There is no need for entire dialogues to be recorded, unless the wording is particularly significant. Don't try to include running updates on every background NPC, either. Give status reports on the important events, but in general, indicate what the major NPCs are trying to accomplish, and then only refer again to them if something changes, they complete the goal, or the PCs encounter and interfere in some way.

In short, apply common sense to what you try to include in the chronology. If it is likely to be significant, record it.

5.2.2 IDENTIFYING INCONSISTENCIES

Occasionally, despite your best efforts to keep track of everything accurately, you will make consistency errors. An NPC will be described one time as dark haired and swarthy, and the next time as blonde and pale. The accent used by the PCs' mentor switches from Irish to British. The caravan that left thirteen days ago has arrived in the capital twice as early as it should have. These things happen, and while you need to address them, don't worry too much about them. Nobody is perfect, and even players (who expect GMs to be infallible), will forgive you after some good-natured kidding after an error has cropped up.

However, before you turn red and stammer at a mistake made in session, consider a few rules for how to cover yourself in these situations.

Blatant Errors

These are the errors that are obvious, glaring and undeniable. These are the most difficult to cover, unless you are good at very fancy footwork. There are three types of blatant errors, two of which are recoverable, and one of which is only moderately recoverable.

Physical errors—These are altered accents, conflicting physical descriptions, errors in distance and location of places the PCs are intimately familiar with, and other area in which the PCs have some verified, absolute understanding of the way things are supposed to be as opposed to the way they have just been presented. These are the most difficult areas to cover. Sometimes you can have the NPCs claim that the PCs had misinterpreted events (bad judgements on distance, misunderstanding of an accent, etc.), but this is usually a pretty transparent ploy, and the players will scoff at it even if they have the PCs accept it. At times, however, you can use such errors as story elements. If the NPC is called on his accent, have him stammer and correct it, then deny it ever changed. You can then later discover (or invent on the spot) a reason for him to really be from one area and be pretending to be from another. If done smoothly, your players will now believe that it was intentional, rather than an error, and you will have inserted a new story element in a very slick fashion.

System errors—These are misapplied rules, forgotten player skills, and various errors that deal not with the players or the story, but with the game system being used, and usually stems from an unfamiliarity with the system. In general, the GM should rectify the error if it

is small and easily changed without breaking the flow of the game. Not doing so will bring even more attention to it than it, as players will grumble about it. (Example: applying the wrong critical, forgetting a skill modifier; anything small and fixable with a bare minimum of effort and no backtracking in events). If the error is a larger one, then the GM should make a judgement call. If the error is likely to disrupt the story or session if not corrected, then he will have to address it. If not, then let it stand and move on. Apply the backtracking rule: If correcting an error would mean significant backtracking in the story and in events, then it should not be corrected. Replaying events destroys the pacing and connectivity of a scene, and should be avoided at all costs. (At times, however, even this rule has exceptions. If the error on your part was identifiable as such, and resulted in the death of a PC due to that error, then you should probably backtrack and give that player another chance.) Occasionally, a player will argue with a system mechanic that has been accurately applied, but does not seem to reflect reality well. This is again a judgement call. If you agree, then rule however you wish. If the system is a highly streamlined system, however, there are likely to be a great number of mechanics that are expedient rather than realistic, and that is the nature of the system. In these cases, let the result stand and move on. The best ways to handle these situations is to simply nod sagely when players protest. Tell them you know the rule quite well and it does not apply in this situation. When they ask why, look at them knowingly and tell them that they'll have to figure that out for themselves. They'll become quiet and try to decide what is really going on, and you should have time to work up a reasonable explanation before long. Try to avoid the image of making arbitrary decisions when you can make everything seem like it has a good reason.

Information/Background errors—These errors are the easiest to smooth over. If an NPC gives the players information that later proves to be contradicted, then the NPC was either misinformed, lying to the PCs or there was a mutual misunderstanding. If the PCs confront the misinforming NPC, have him react as you see fit, in confusion, anger or shame... but do not stop and recant what the NPC has said unless it is so vital to the story at this point that to have the NPC make the error would derail the entire story. Practice your poker face and when a player calls you on an error, either look at him matter-of-factly or respond as the NPC in character. Do not give the players any indication that you have been caught out, because PCs are incredibly good at finding these inconsistencies. If they are there, the PCs will pick up on them and it is your job to patch these holes in your story by turning them into elements of your story.



Mistake or Machination?

As described above, one can often turn an error into a story element by cleverly covering the mistake with a glib reaction (or non-reaction). What is more, some NPCs will lend themselves particularly well to helping you cover these errors. Despite the most ambitious preparation or the most organized approach, there will be elements of your story that you will have to improvise as you go. The PCs will go out of their way to find an NPC you were totally unprepared and for whom you have not the slightest idea of motivations or goals. These are the NPCs with whom you are most likely to make consistency errors, because of the very fact that you were unprepared for their presence. So when the errors occur (and they will), then you can use those errors as instant motivation for the NPC in question. Incorrect information relayed by the NPC becomes a machination designed to turn the PCs to his own uses, or to influence them in some fashion. Street urchins looking for sympathy, or curmudgeons trying to get the PCs to help him repay an old enemy... work your mistakes into machinations for these individuals and you will once again awe your players with your ability to have every detail of your setting and story alive with purpose and consistency. Nothing impresses a player more than seeing an error, trying to catch the GM on it, and then going on to see how it was in fact a complex background maneuver between NPCs. Players eat this kind of stuff up, and will look goggle-eyed at you for your ability to keep an entire world alive inside your skull. Little do they know that most of it is hindsight, and making the story fit the facts, rather than the reverse.

5.2.3 CHECKING THE VISIBLE SCOPE

This is a checks and balances phase. The importance of the preservation of the visible scope has been addressed elsewhere, but this step should be a standard part of every game session post-mortem. Examine carefully those areas in which the PCs either saw the actual scope or were allowed to actually affect it. Did you inadvertently give the PCs more influence or information than you intended? If so, then you need to insert a mechanism to correct the problem. Here are a few examples:

False access—Make the access to the actual scope a false one. If the PCs have acquired a Governor's Seal which grants them more authority than you wish them to have, make the Seal a counterfeit. The first time they try to use it (or perhaps the first time they try to use it on someone who can spot the fake), they will be in trouble.

Remove the access—If the access is something physical, as in the example above, simply take it away. There are endless others who would love to get their hands on a Seal of Office, and the players may find that it is more trouble than it is worth. You should be careful, however, as too blatant a removal can be discerned as the GM taking away the possessions of the PCs, rather than a story element. You should make clear the value of such an item, and be sure that you can reasonably explain its removal, before doing so. (This doesn't mean you should explain everything to the players, but be ready with the details as they discover them... don't try to ad-lib something as important to the PCs as this kind of things usually is.)

Devalue the access—If the PCs have gained the ear of the King, and you are finding it to be a pain in the neck, then depose the King. Shift the balance of power and have a new King come in who is not so kindly disposed to the PCs, even jealous or threatened. Where one moment the PCs were the darlings of the kingdom, they may be hunted outlaws the next. As before, however, be careful with this kind of mechanism. Players will spot an arbitrary move a mile away, so put some story investment behind it. This kind of move usually deserves its own full-fledged story.

5.3 METABOLISM

A discussion of metabolism might seem to be more suited to the section on Story Design, but because so many of the techniques can only be utilized in the game session and after the story has begun, it is discussed under story progression.

5.3.1 THE NATURE OF METABOLISM

The metabolism of a story refers to a combination of things: the pacing, the scope, the power levels achieved by the players and NPCs, etc. It is a term used to describe the amount of energy, involvement and challenge in a story and game, as well as the rate at which the stakes and scope of the story is raised.

Metabolism has the potential to raise a game to great heights, but can kill a game just as easily. The metabolism of a story is akin to a candle burning—a candle that burns twice as bright burns half as long, and all of the work that a GM puts into a story burns in a kind of theatrical fire. The more grand the story the faster the fire burns, and the more theatrical fuel the GM must create to sustain the pace. The GM must come up with more and more elaborate and grand plots, which in turn require more powerful monsters and NPCs, which in turn boost the power levels of the players and the scope of the stories. Eventually the stakes have risen so high that the GM is no longer able to challenge the players or truly engage them in the story. The theatrical fuel is exhausted, and the flame begins to die. This means the end of the campaign, no matter how grand, as the players and the GM become jaded.

5.3.2 THE ARGUMENT FOR CONTROL

No one wants good campaign to end. When a campaign has had time to fill out and mature, the GM can tell more complex and gripping stories because the framework is so much more detailed and familiar to both GM and players. Because the players have developed an intuitive grasp for many of the elements of the setting, they are more enthusiastic and involved with the characters. Their sensitivity to the story increases, and the quality of the story can increase proportionally.

Unfortunately, as these events unfold and the PCs advance in knowledge, they are also advancing in power and influence. The GM may have raised the scope several times, and it becomes harder and harder to raise the actual scope beyond the reach of the players. After saving the kingdom from the evil plots of the Prime Minister, the players have little interest in tracking down a purse-snatcher.



5.3.3 TECHNIQUES

There are a number of means by which the metabolism of a story may be controlled, but most of them depend upon simply being stingy with the scope and power level of the stories you tell as a GM. There is plenty of story interest and intrigue to be had without going over the top every time, and if you want your campaign to last, you will have to exercise some caution.

Keep the Gods Out of the Story!

The deities of a campaign world are, obviously, the highest scope available to the GM. If you choose to allow the players access to this level, you are leaving yourself nowhere to go when the time comes to raise the scope again. Having dealt with a god, PCs are unlikely to be intimidated by the street thug again. This principle applies as well to any very powerful creature or NPC. The higher you begin the scope of the story, the less room you give yourself to grow later in the game.

Don't Give the Players the Keys to the City

Often GMs make it too easy for PCs to contact and obtain assistance from the ranking figures and authorities in the campaign. The path to these NPCs, especially in medieval settings, should be long and difficult. Long before a large, armed PC group could make their way to the King (or even mayor), they would have been stopped and turned away by underlings and guards. Even if the PCs insist that they need to talk to the person, would they really be able to reach that person? It might be better to have them give the message to another underling to pass on the person in question, because once they have the ear of such an individual, the scope of the story has risen that much more.

Keep the PCs Poor

Money and treasure are another stumbling block for many GMs. If you have handed out incredible fortunes to your PCs for their exploits, you have closed down another area of the story. Player sensitivity to the material needs of the PC will be next to nothing if they have been handed hundreds of gold pieces for some reason. As long as the PCs need money they will remain very impressionable and subject to story manipulation. Players cannot be expected to have a sense for your theatrical intentions. If they can logically solve a problem with the money you have given them, they will. If you don't want them to have that option then it is far better to hold back the treasure earlier than to try to think up reasons why a merchant won't accept their gold later.

In general, the treasure that PCs get from adventures should not have much coinage in it. In medieval settings, the items people owned were their treasure. Try to convert the treasure the players might find into items. Unique items tell a story. An orc wearing a metal dish on his stomach, obviously from a local house that was burned, tells a story. A good warrior using an ugly goblin shield, says, "Its all I could get." There are plenty of alternatives to throwing ridiculous amounts of treasure at players to satisfy their desire for reward. If the items you give are intriguing and useful, they will be more appreciated than mere money, which is just something players record on their character sheet.

Gold is the big theatrical favorite for role-playing games of the middle ages. A more moderate choice would be the silver standard. A silver coin, usually only the size of a dime, was the dominant coinage in Europe for several centuries. The copper or tin coin will fit nicely into the story when purchasing beer or food and tipping the stable boy. A GM should try using other types of materials for coins. Coral, ivory, alabaster, amber and bone are just some possible alternatives. Remember, this is fantasy. Think of the theatrical fuel that you will have created, if your players have played several sessions and finally see something made of gold. The players will value gold more if there is less of it around. This is a simple technique that creates more story context and keeps players sensitive to the game. Less treasure does not limit your game to less fun. Because the rewards of the game are relative, one GM's players will enjoy finding silver as much as another group might enjoy gold, and you will have room to expand later in the game.

Use Experience Points to Reward Good Play

Most game systems provide a set of formulaic rules for awarding experience points. Unfortunately, these systems do not always encourage good role playing. A player who is desperate to keep with the group's advancing levels will do what the system demands. If the system rewards a last minute back stab on a wounded foe, then the player will be forced to play this way. If the players are rewarded for playing well, in addition to killing monsters, the realism of the game can be reinforced. Rewarding players who play in a reasonable manner will cause the game's quality to rise and will help keep the "Kill Everything" mentality from taking hold.

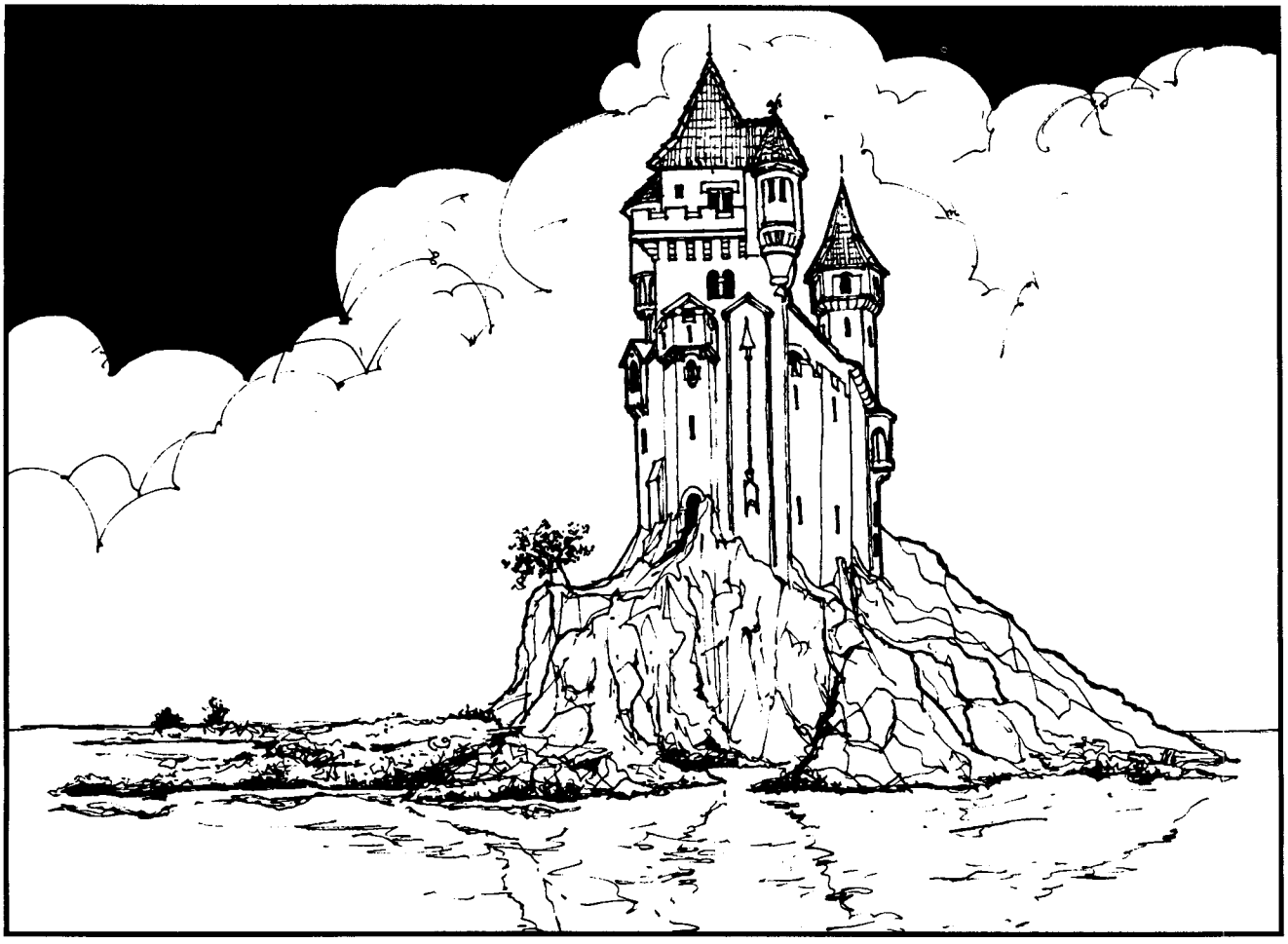
The importance of this to metabolism is that when players are rewarded for realistic and in-character playing, the requirements of the story drop in scope. If the players can be engaged in the intricacies of a small setting detail, there will be no need to bombard the players with larger and more impressive story elements to maintain their interest and intensity.

Bringing Characters In From Other Campaigns

This is almost self-explanatory. When a character comes from a campaign other than your own it is almost a certainty that the metabolism of that game will be different from your own. Magical items, treasure, spells. Abilities or just knowledge may be inappropriate to your campaign, and you will face the uncomfortable task of trying to strip away (or at times, add to) the hard-won possessions of the PC, to the distress of the player. Unfortunately, the alternative is to allow these unbalancing elements into your game, with the subsequent demands that you equalize the situation by bringing the other characters up to that power level.

Building from Smaller Stories

Large stories usually require a larger scope than smaller ones. A story about saving the world from an evil sorcerer will require a very large scope and high power level, and you will have upped the metabolism of the story so much to begin with that it will be hard to back down afterwards. A smaller story, about a woman's missing child, or about



a smuggling ring in the major campaign city, is much more manageable, and because it is so much closer to real life, the role playing will often be more genuine than with the stories of monumental scope.

The key here is detail—small stories that are encased within larger stories automatically build the detail for the larger story, a common lack in stories of larger scope. In a long-term campaign, if you create a large story by having it slowly revealed through smaller stories, you will have set the stage for that larger story by the time you get to it. Its flavor and soul reside in the stories that support it. The smaller stories slowly describe the visible scope and as the players eventually move up in scope, they will be moving into a larger story that has a far stronger foundation than could be achieved if the background work had not already been experienced by GM and players alike.

The Role of Magic

This has been covered in the sections on Story and Campaign Design, but it bears a brief re-examination here. Magic is a shortcut, in many ways. If the PCs can cast a spell to accomplish a goal that would normally have provided hours of role playing and interesting challenges, then magic is not supporting your game, it is breaking it down. Magic should be utilized only to accomplish things that cannot be accomplished any other way. Be cautious in determining the role magic is to play in your stories, and be cautious in what you allow your players access to in terms of magic.

Low Impact Theatrics

Low-impact theatrics are methods of controlling the metabolism that work by presenting a false rise in scope. Artificially reducing the scope of a game after a story is rarely satisfying to a player, but if the initial rise is in fact a false one, the subsequent drop is more justified and less contrived.

Dreams and Illusions—Dreams and Illusions allow the GM to present events of a larger scale without disturbing the scope of the story. If a PC has a dream of a great battle the dramatics are felt, but when the PC has awakened the battle was not fought. The GM did not "really" have a great battle to produce the imagery of the dream, and the actual scope of the story did not really touch the visible scope. With this method, the GM can make up a high intensity game session without turning up the real game volume. Be careful, however, to avoid the "...and then the little boy woke up!" style. Give dreams a beginning that seams with the rest of the story and then bring the dream to a culmination of some kind, so that the player will realize that it was a dream just before the PC wakes up.

Reminiscent Moment—A PC remembering a dramatic moment of his past is an unmatched theatrical source. As long as the GM is careful not to contradict later actions and activities by the player, nearly anything can reasonably be added (Do not, for example, let the player adventure with another PC for six game sessions and

then have him Reminisce about how that PC slew his father in cold blood and swore the PC to revenge. This will not go over well.) All manner of great theatrical moments may be within the PC's past. A few critical plot elements can be hidden or even added at the last moment, as the story is played and the PC develops. The GM may add a richer background though the play of these reminiscent moments. Remember, though, that PCs will have less ability to affect the past vision, because they are memories. A GM must maintain the concept that the memory is a fixed past occurrence. Let the PC play himself during the vision, but make clear that the player must play out the event as it has already happened.

Mistaken Perspective—Mistaken Perspective is much more difficult and must be used within a complex and subjective dialogue environment to work well. Essentially, this technique utilizes a description given by the GM to a player that is mistaken in nature. The player will think he has seen what the GM has told him, but that may lead him to jump to conclusions. His assumptions will make for a wonderful twist in the plot. For example, a GM tells the player that some men in the street are carrying Harvackion short swords. These men might not be carrying Harvackion swords, but swords that are very similar, and the party decides to flee the town to avoid these old enemies. Mistaken perspective can generate the belief that larger or more intense events are occurring than actually are, and provide the energy of a rise in scope without actually having to adjust the metabolism.

Do not use these methods too often, as it can be frustrating to the player if everything they do is taken away again afterwards. But as an occasional injection into the story, low-impact theatrics can provide the energy and grand scope that the primary story may be stingy with.

5.4 RETUNING THE STORY

You should always be ready to modify your story to respond to the actions and decisions of the PCs. Sometimes retuning is as simple as checking a few names, writing down some notes on what the NPC will say next time, and refreshing yourself of the details of the story. Sometimes, however, a major revision of the story is required. This may come about because you have decided that the story as originally conceived is flawed, or that there is a better way to accomplish what you want to do. You may decide that the original story just isn't exciting enough and you wish to shift the focus to an area that has generated more interest. All of these are perfectly acceptable reasons for retuning your story, and you should never feel hesitant about doing so, as long as you maintain some caution.

At times, in fact, the players will virtually demand that you retune the story, casting their votes through the actions of their PCs. The players may be far more intrigued by the history of the ruins on the hill than by the mystery in the small village they overlook. Your story ideas may be derailed by PCs constantly racing off to explore what you had intended as "flavor details" or mere background.

Should you listen to and accede to these "demands"? In general, if possible, yes. Your story may be significant and important, but it is not all there is to the game. If the players really have a desire to do something, perhaps you should let them. Don't derail your own story in mid-stream–don't let the PCs escape a troublesome situation to allow them to gallivant off in another direction just because they really want to. Make them work for it. If the opportunity arises, and they really wish to, let them follow their noses, but don't let them run the show. Turn the new direction into the story, and proceed normally, possibly referring and returning to your previous story later on.

5.4.1 EXAMINING CHARACTER OPTIONS

Within a session, player characters are often faced with a choice or series of choices. The choices you give them determine the directions in which the PCs may go, not accounting for player creativity (a considerable force for mayhem and circumvention). It is important that you understand what choices you are offering to your players so that you will be certain that you offering them enough, or not too many. Normally, PCs will have several options open to them, and will select from one of them. You can prepare in a basic fashion for several of them, and then react during the session to events as they occur. However, when PCs are given more or fewer choices, you need to exercise greater caution.

The Open Field

When a PC has a vast number of choices open to him, and few restrictions, the choices made will usually be determined more by what interests him, rather than what will further the story. If you have no particular story to put forward at the time (a situation one should strive to avoid), then having a vast array of options may be both reasonable and desirable. If you have the characters in the middle of a story, however, you should be providing some direction, and choices should have emerged for the PCs at this point.

In general, if you have given the PC an open field of choices, it should be because background events are working to overtake him. It is usually fine to allow the PC a wide variety of choices if he is going to be swept up in story events regardless of what course he follows. If the PCs are unaware that the posse is after them, let them do what they want for a while; eventually the posse will catch up and the fun will begin. That "free" time is fun and realistic (as long as it doesn't begin to drag), and will provide for great cinematic moments when the PCs finally realize that they should have been fleeing all of this time.

When looking at your story, take a look at what choices are open to the PC. This does not, of course, mean whether the PC can try to do anything he likes. Of course that is the case. If the PC wishes to shoot himself in the head, he can certainly give it a shot. The choices to which this topic refers are those choices that will lead the PC in a definable and invested direction. Searching the ruins, heading into battle, following up on the disappearance of the Mayor's daughter–all of these may be options with direction and interest. Going for a beer, going to sleep, buying new shoes... these are non-choices in the context of this discussion. If the PC has a wide variety of interesting and useful choices, then he has an open field.

The One Way Street

On the other hand, if the PC has been herded into a situation in which there are very few choices, then you need to be sure that it is the choice that you wish to have offered. In addition, you should realize that when you force PCs down a bottleneck, they will rebel against it. Players dislike having their PCs forced into decisions as much as they dislike being forced into decisions in real life. If you make clear that there is only one choice available to a PC, you can expect the player to search for every conceivable option by which to circumvent you. In addition, unless you are playing a story with a very heavy element of tragedy or predestination, do not place PCs in the position of having to choose certain death. The players will resent it, and you will be accused of having manipulated events to bring about the death of the PC.

Maintaining the Illusion of Free Will

In both circumstances, the open field and the one way street, it is important that you maintain the illusion of free will. Let the PC (and player) believe that his fate is his own, and that his choices are his to make. Even if you are manipulating background events to bring about a certain outcome, you should try to offer the character some feeling that he is in control of his own destiny. Without this vital feeling, the player of the PC will quickly become resentful or bored.

When retuning the story, think about the choices you will be offering the PCs in the coming sessions, as well as the options you have offered thus far. Advance the story, but be as fair as you can. Let the character hold as many of his own reins as you can allow and still maintain control of the story. The illusion of free will thus gained is more satisfying to the PC and player than the interest in watching a preprogrammed play unfold around him.

5.4.2 EXAMINING PLAYER OPTIONS

As a consideration beyond the options you have left open to the PC, you should consider what options you have offered the player. Remember, the player sees the overall picture in a way his character cannot. Even the best role players will respond in a personal fashion at times, viewing their character's fate as something for which they should be an advocate. While they may not argue with the GM for a fairer handling, or try to wrestle fate itself (in the form of trying to convince the GM to recant a decision), they will certainly have these feelings. Players are very protective of their PCs, and you need to recognize this when manipulating the PCs.

Where PCs may not know their fate, the player has a better view and a deeper understanding of the things that are happening. For example, the character might not know that there are six ruffians on the other side of the door, waiting to jump the PC, but the player might know it from having overheard the GM describe the scene to the other players who are at a different vantage. The good role player will not utilize that knowledge if the PC could not know it, but he will still know it himself. While it is important to maintain the illusion of free will for the PC, it is probably more important to maintain the illusion that you are being fair and impartial to the PCs for the sake of the player.

The Perils of Frustration

If you consistently herd the PCs through narrow options, you will be in danger of frustrating your player. The PC may take events in stride, knowing that sometimes there are no choices in life, but that is seldom the reason that a player is playing a role playing game. People play games to be able to live out fantasies and effect events in ways they cannot in real life. It is a vicarious look into a more exciting and usually freer life and environment, and if you constantly make the PCs jump through hoops you will not be providing the players with what they want, and they will be unhappy with the way the game is going. Sometimes it is hard to perceive this fact, even for the player, because the quality of the game may be very high. The players and GM may be excellent, and the PCs may be accomplishing great things. But if the players and GM are not receiving that special something that makes them want to role play in the first place, the game will still not be a success.

This is extremely hard to define. Trying to decide what it is that a person wants from a game is a very intuitive and insightful process, and not always successful, even by the persons themselves. But realize that one of the quickest ways to prevent a person from getting that special something is constantly to limit his options. It can be done, but it must be done with caution, or you will find yourself in the perplexing situation of possibly running an excellent game that no one is enjoying.

The other side of this coin is when the PC has many options open to him but the player has absolutely no idea which to take. If you have made it clear that the choice is critical but have given no means to make a decision on the matter, your player may become frustrated. Once or twice, this can be an important story device. But if you continually place the player in this position, he will begin to feel like he could just be rolling dice for his PC's decisions, and he will lose interest in the decisions entirely.

Frustrating the PCs and players is a useful device, and even fun at times, but don't overdo it. Players are playing to be challenged and intrigued, not irritated and frustrated.

The Perils of Indulgence

On the other hand, one can go to the opposite extreme. If you constantly allow the players unlimited options from which to choose, with answers about those choices, you will be lessening the challenge. A challenge is only a challenge if the options and resources for overcoming it create an environment that makes it difficult. Don't let PCs constantly turn to sages, mentors, computers or whatever to solve their problems. No story should simply be a question of plodding through the steps in order to put the puzzle together. Don't drop hints to players except as an NPC dropping one to a PC. If you too often indulge your players and PCs by offering them everything they need to overcome the challenge of the story, they will quickly become bored and you will lose the vitality of the story.

Striking a Balance

The key to striking a balance is just to keep an eye on your players. Make sure that there is an answer to all of your puzzles, and make sure that you have given the PCs hints in time to make use of them. If the players are unable to recognize the hints, you may have to give them a little nudge. In short, make sure that you don't hand solutions to the players, but be wary that you don't give such obscure clues that there is no way for anyone but the GM to put them

together. When the time comes to give clues, don't give the PCs huge ones at first... make the clues small and slightly misleading, even. As the PCs begin to compile the data, they will hopefully begin seeing the patterns, and by the time the big clue comes, it will no longer seem like the GM is handing the players a large hint... it will be the culmination of the work of the PCs.

5.4.3 EXAMINING NPC OPTIONS

When one is trying to balance the requirements of a story, attend to the desires and needs of the players, watch the metabolism and scope of the story and continuously produce creative resources towards all of this, it is easy to start looking at your game as a set of tools to produce a desired effect. NPCs, setting, story line... all are supposed to work together to produce the story you are striving to present. But do not forget the very definition of an NPC–a character who does not belong to a player.

NPCs are full-fledged characters in their own right, and you will be doing both them and yourself a disservice if you utilize them as mere tools in the story. Nothing is more obvious to a player than an NPC who is only there as a vehicle for something the GM wants to say or do. NPCs need to have their own motivations, goals and personalities, and you need to support them (see NPCs, Section 3.6). It is certainly within your purview to alter an NPCs actions or motivations to accomplish something you need done, but try to reconcile it with the personality or fundamental nature of the NPC, or the NPC will lose credibility.

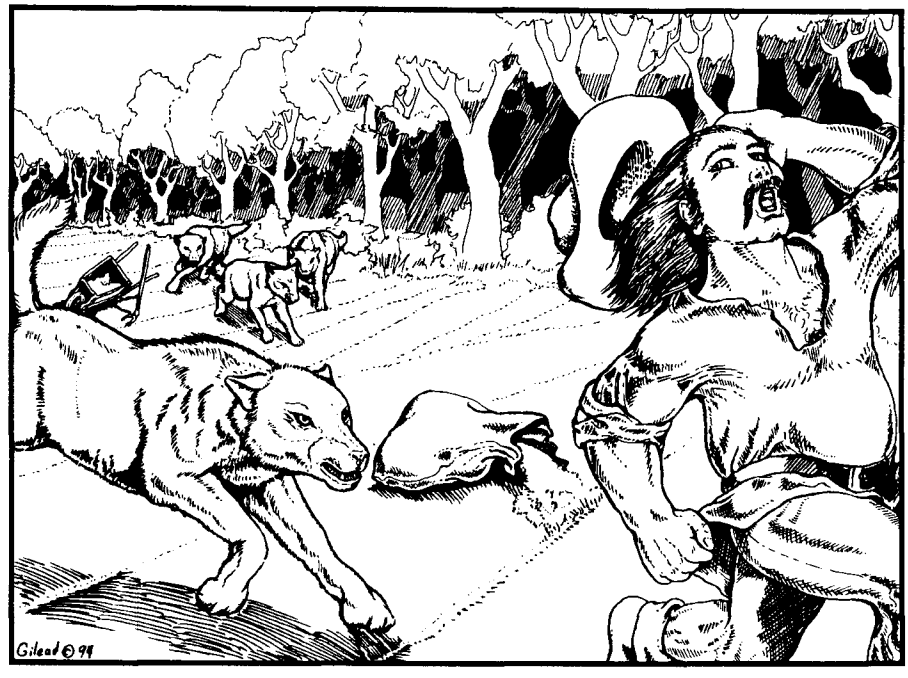
Story Concerns and the Puppet Master

It is this "Puppet Master" mentality that leeches life and vitality from an NPC. However, what do you do if you need to have a particular NPC do something within the story, but it seems to go against the natural inclination of the NPC as you have already envisioned or portrayed him?

Get somebody else—Is there another NPC who can possibly do the job? If so, or if you can plausibly invent one, do not compromise an existing NPC. Part of the consistency and connectivity of your world depends on your realistic portrayal and handling of your NPCs, and if you make a habit of devaluing the trueness of your NPCs, you will raise flags of disbelief in the minds of your players.

Force the NPC—Have the NPC do the required task, but enforce it from outside means. For instance, if you need to have a particular item taken from a PC and there is no way to get anyone but an already established NPC henchman past the watchful eyes of the PC, then have that NPC take it, but under duress. The individual wanting the item delivers a threat to the NPCs family, friends, or self, and the NPC gives in and does what is demanded of him. This will prevent you from having to sacrifice the established persona and motivational set of the NPC, while still accomplishing what the story has demanded.

Redefine the NPC—If worse comes to worst, then redefine the NPC. By necessity, you will have to redefine the personality of the NPC either as one capable of duplicity and machination, or one with a deeply hidden side. In addition, you will have to establish (in your own mind, at least), a reason why the NPC wishes to carry out this particular task.



Fortunately, it is not always this difficult to reconcile actions with NPCs. In fact, usually when a task needs doing, an appropriate NPC will suggest himself, and you will not have to worry about undoing all of your hard persona-establishing work.

Reevaluating Motivations

So you have decided to redefine the NPC and retune his motivations. Where do you start? The simple fact is that you're going to have to start from the ground up, only this time you will be working under a number of restrictions. On the other hand, you will also have a fairly broad base of background and some general personality traits established.

Examine the new required traits of the NPC, and go through the NPC definition process that you undertook in Section 3.6. Do not forget that much of the recent history of the NPC is already established, as will a significant part of the past life of the NPC. You have a good deal of flexibility in determining how much of the distant past was a "fabrication" on the part of the NPC, and how much was real. If the NPC is particularly devious and manipulative, then most of what the PCs already know about him is likely to be false. If the NPC is just showing a new, previously hidden side, then much of it will remain, but there should be new, hitherto unrevealed chapters in that past that have created this hidden side.

Do not derail an NPC and then try to return him to the previous state, unless you are using mind control or the like. You must account for the changes and discrepancies.



What Do Players Know, Anyway?

Fortunately, the players may not be that familiar with the NPC, yet. As long as you can end with the persona and motivations of the NPC firmly fixed in your own mind to your own satisfaction, feel free to revise the NPC to whatever extent you wish, within the bounds of what you can explain to the players. If the PCs just met the NPC, you may have to do very little fancy footwork as they probably will have little idea of what he is like, anyway. It is only when the PCs (and players) have a clear idea of the persona of the NPC that you must work within these limitations. A relatively new NPC can simply be reworked from the ground up like any new NPC.

5.4.4 SWITCHING DIRECTIONS SMOOTHLY

At times you will need to retune your story so drastically that it involves a fundamental shift in the story line or even the nature of the story. This may be planned from the outset, or it may be a reaction to session events. Regardless, the mechanisms are the same.

It may be that you are changing some of the background of the story. Maybe you have decided that you don't want the story to revolve around the manipulations of a powerful underworld boss, but wish instead to have things all be a part of a larger plan by the prime minister of the country. You will have to change both the actual and the visible scope to reflect these changes, but the majority of changes will occur within the actual scope, leaving the visible scope relatively untouched.

On the other hand, if you are changing the story because of a mistake you have made, the majority of your changes may occur in the visible scope. For instance, if you were trying to time the arrival of a caravan with the PCs own arrival in the city, and after doing so realized that the distances involved meant that it would have been impossible, then you are faced with a few choices. You can change the arrival time of the caravan (visible scope), change the departure time of the caravan (actual scope if the PCs don't know when it left, visible if they do), or change which caravan it is that has just arrived (actual scope).

Within the Actual Scope

Changes within the actual scope are both easier and more complex. They are easier in that the players are usually not aware of the particulars of the actual scope, so changes made there are only visible to players by their effects. But in turn, they are more complex because each change in the actual scope will affect the rest of the elements at that level, and you must account for those changes.

In general, however, the actual scope allows sudden changes more flexibly than does the visible scope. Changes made in the actual scope need not affect the visible scope at all, except in your understanding of the reasons behind the elements of action in the visible scope. Apply the same techniques you learned for designing the actual scope to this situation, and you will seldom encounter problems.

Within the Visible Scope

Changes made within the visible scope are more difficult. The PCs already have hard and fast information about the environment and situation and you will be throwing them a curve. You need to try to reorient the story elements to reflect the new foundation you want to place, and for this reason, any significant changes made in the visible scope almost always affect the actual scope, and require at least as much work there to reconcile. At times you can change things and then explain them as background events taking place out of the vicinity and notice of the PCs (e.g., the tavern is burned down when the PCs next return). In general, the best way to introduce these changes are to introduce a new story element that is responsible for the alterations. Perhaps a new crime lord, or the rich noble has decided to change things. New NPCs and new activities on their part can help you reorient settings and events as necessary most of the time.

You need not show the PCs the reason for such changes, but if they go looking, you need to have the reasons already in hand, because you have altered the world view of the PCs and players and they will likely remain suspicious as long as they do not know the cause.

When the Cows Are Already Out of the Barn

Sometimes you have made such a blatant error that you cannot fix it subtly. Rather than saying, "The large dog bites at you and nips you slightly," you accidentally said, "The werewolf bites at you and nips you slightly." Oops. Your careful machinations to infect a PC with lycanthropy have been totally derailed. The players all say, "What?! Quick, to a cleric!" and your story element has been totally derailed. At a time like this the best course may actually be to stop and (after suitable self-recrimination for carelessness) tell the players that there is no werewolf and the dog does not bite the PC. If the story depended on it being a surprise, the story is already blown. Better, perhaps, to just stop and completely uproot that microstory and move on to another. You can always reuse the story later with another group, or once this group has forgotten about it.

But if you need to actually rewrite an event, and there is no other way to handle the problem, do so quickly and thoroughly and move on. Don't meander about it; stop the story, fix the problem, and then get back to it. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and a story is no different. If you have completely broken one of the links of your story, stop, get rid of it, and then put your story-chain back together and move on. Trying to work around it will only detract from everything else.

5.4.5 REESTABLISHING STORY CONTROL

The most important aspect of retuning is in the attention paid to story control. There is no reason to tune a story at all unless it is being done to keep a firm grasp on the story line and how it unfolds. Every action you take in the course of retuning is taken because you need to reestablish story control. Otherwise, mere improvisation during a game session would suffice, and retuning would be moot.

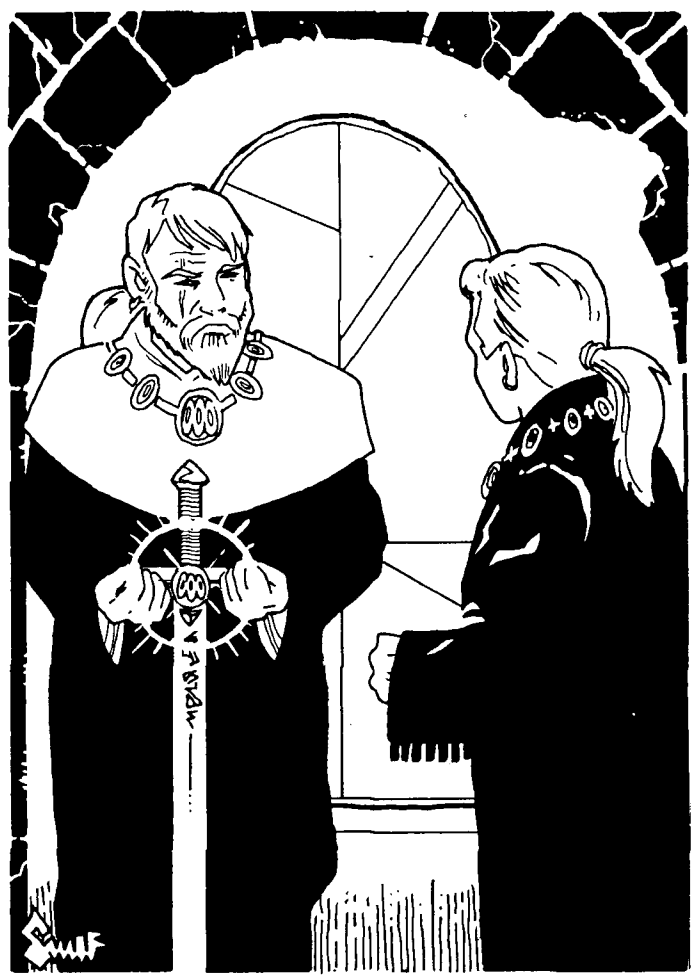
However, the reestablishment of story control does not imply that it is or should only be done when the story is getting out of control. An construction engineer checks and rechecks his work constantly not because things keep getting out of hand, but because it is his intention never to let it get out of hand in the first place. Your intent should be the same.

Adjusting the Scope

Adjusting the scope of the story is when you make your decisions as to what the visible scope will be. The actual scope is everything above that, centered mostly on everything that is just above the elements of the visible scope. In this regard, the actual scope can largely take care of itself. The visible scope, however, requires a more deliberate approach.

Adjustments to the scope should either be very small or very large, in general. Small clues can be dropped throughout an adventure as to larger machinations, or the final climax may produce broad, sweeping revelations as to the larger scope of the story. The halfway measure can be unsatisfactory, mainly because of the effect that a large prior revelation will have on the final climax. Imagine, for example, if halfway through the murder mystery, an NPC revealed that he was the murderer, but the PCs were expected to finish things out by discovering the method and motive. Well, there is certainly an avenue for exploration there, but the final climax would have been so much more satisfying if that large revelation had been delayed.

Examine what revelations you have provided your players, and then decide what actions they will be able to take on that knowledge. The range of possibilities provided by this new information will determine your scope. If the PCs have learned that a group of thieves is responsible for the rash of burglaries on the west side, and can prove it, then they now have the option of going to the authorities and turning the thieves over to justice. Played one way, the PCs will remove themselves from the matter in this way as the authorities deal with the matter. Played another way, the PCs will be owed a debt of gratitude by the authorities and a debt of hatred by the criminals, and the scope of the game has just been magnified to a small degree. If the PCs can call in favors or now have access to channels of influence through the authorities, then the scope may have magnified considerably. By thinking out the course you wish to take beforehand, you can save yourself headaches down the road. If you simply do not want your PCs to have all of those strings to pull, then you lock the scope where it is and have the responses to their overtures met in such a fashion that the scope remains the same. The authorities thank them kindly, capture the thieves, and the PCs are expected to go their merry way. The "Thank you, citizen" reaction can be very effective in controlling the scope of a game.



Moving the Story Along

Another common problem in a game is when it bogs down as the PCs argue about the next course of action, or the players cannot focus on the game enough to channel their activities. If this goes on too long, the GM must reestablish control in order to get the story moving again. There are countless methods available to a GM, with a few listed here.

The Messenger—An NPC arrives from the PCs mentor, employer, King, parents, etc., imploring or ordering them to get moving. This might be a summons or a request for an update of their activities. Unfortunately, this has the danger of seeming contrived, so try to create a legitimate reason for the NPC to be sending a message to the PCs, rather than it being a clear message from the GM to move on.

The Crisis—Present the PCs with a reason to need to move along. Physical danger is usually effective, but not always necessary. While setting the house on fire will certainly get the PCs moving, it is also rather drastic. Concern about loved ones, blackmail, prior appointments, the parade coming down the road... all of these events can prod PCs to move ahead, if only to leave the area.

The Insight—Give one of the PCs a piece of information that will get the PCs moving along. This may be the clue they've been seeking, or it might be a reason to exit the scene. If one of the PCs has some means of divination, this is easier to accomplish. Otherwise, you will have to be exceedingly subtle to avoid the sense of contrivance. The important thing is to keep the level of interest in the game from dropping below the threshold at which the players will just give up and play will grind to a halt. If that seems imminent, then try to give one of the PCs some small clue that will regenerate the interest in the puzzle. Note also that this clue is often more effectively delivered by a small occurrence or NPC action, rather than just informing the player that they have noticed something.

There are endless variations on story injections that a GM can make to get the story moving. The important thing is to maintain interest, and keeping up the pace is one of the best ways to accomplish this.

5.5 EXTRAPOLATION

The final (and perhaps most important) part of story maintenance is the extrapolation of session events to overall story and setting changes. This is where you decide how to expand that chance encounter to a vital story element, or how to tie in the Duke to the local slave trade.

5.5.1 CHECKING THE ACTUAL SCOPE

After the session, take a look at the events that have occurred. You will need to decide which of these events have larger ramifications than the immediate scene, and apply those ramifications to the actual scope of your story.

Lackey Updates—Has the hireling or underling of a major NPC been either detained, killed, converted, or given crucial information? Reflect briefly on what will happen after the NPC leaves the scene. Will his employer fire him for failing to rout the PCs? Will the information the PCs handed to him be given immediately to the PCs' enemies? Will the NPC need to be replaced because the PCs killed him? If the person the PCs have kidnapped and interrogated is actually the Baron's son, they may be in for a surprise, and you need to make sure that you have considered the nature of that surprise.

Antagonist Adjustments—Have the PCs done anything to alter the plans of the antagonist of the story? If the PCs have just broken up the drug ring of the crime lord of the city, it is a safe bet that something will be done about it. Reevaluate the antagonists' plans according to whatever new information they would have. Plans never survive contact with the enemy, and you should never let your players have it easy by never having the bad guys adjust their plans.

Henchman Effects—Have the henchmen of the PCs some reason to reevaluate their position? Has the loved one of a PC had a change of heart, or decided to try to get some time alone with the PC?

Background Events—Don't forget to update current events in the realm. Is there a war on? Who is winning? Plague? Elections? Celebrations? Natural Disasters? Keep your setting alive in the story, if only to provide window dressing for your scenes.

Go over your sessions with a fine tooth comb and check the events that have occurred to make sure that they realistically and consistently reflect the actual ramifications such an event would generate.

The Art of Ignorance

Even the few examples above can be intimidating. How can one possibly account for everything that ever happens in a setting? It's an entire world, and there are just too many things to keep track of. How can one GM maintain everything well enough to maintain the consistency and realism that has been discussed here?

The answer is that you can't. There is just no way to cover everything. Instead, you must practice the Art of Ignorance. The Art of Ignorance says that you don't need to know everything, if you can fake it well enough. There is no way, for instance, that every GM will be able to know enough about a person to be able to predict how they will react in any given situation, yet that same GM is able to play NPCs with consummate skill. He fakes it. By providing the players with reactions and dialogues that seem realistic, you can generate a satisfying story.

The same principle applies to story and setting maintenance. Sometimes you just don't know what the reaction to an event would be. When this happens, fake it. If you know that the crime lord would have some reaction, but you don't know what it would be yet, try alerting the PCs to the fact that the crime lord has been sending messengers back and forth all day, or that they think someone might be following them. Very often the PCs will discuss so many options between themselves that you'll be handed a realistic re-

sponse by your players! If you don't know what's happening with the war the kingdom is involved in, just describe the movement of troops through the PCs vicinity and keep track of it. Later, you'll either have more time to figure out what was actually going on and write backwards to fit, or you'll be handed an inspiration that fits all the facts, and you can move on. When time goes on and still no reason has cropped up, examine your players' reactions before you admit such a thing. If they have forgotten about it, don't bring it back up! It might even be that you might stumble across something in a future story that could explain it, and when you then inform your players, they will be in awe of your incredible planning abilities, to have dropped such a seemingly insignificant clue so long ago that ties into the present story.



5.5.2 DEVELOPING FUTURE STORIES

Finally, keep an eye out for future stories. When the ramifications of an event are too large to be handled within the current story, begin setting the groundwork for the next story. If the PCs unknowingly killed the Prince when they attacked that caravan, they have set the stage for the King's revenge. Let the PCs finish the current story but begin to sprinkle small references to the events that are coming. At first, the PCs might hear about someone asking about them. Later, they might hear about the King calling for bounty hunters, and they might even apply! At length, they may see wanted posters, and by this time the new story will be underway, the old story having been completed.

Be careful not to try to maintain too many stories at once. There should only be one main story at any given time. Microstories are a different matter. If the ramifications of an event generates effects that fall within the purview of the current story, then fine. If they generate small unrelated effects, then deal with them in the current story as well. If they generate very large effects that require more attention than can be spared from the current story, then save them and begin to set the stage for them.

Also, be careful not to blend stories into one another too much. Players prefer to have concrete endings to stories, for that feeling of accomplishment and resolution, before focusing attention on something else. If you want to create the confusion inherent in having two stories running concurrently, then do so, but don't do it carelessly.

CAMPAIGN PROGRESSION

Campaign progression is the complement to story progression, and is vital to maintain a consistent background upon which to set story events.

6.1 INTEGRATING SESSION EVENTS

The primary component of campaign maintenance is the integration of story events into the setting.

6.1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTENANCE

Once the events of a story have occurred, they become part of the history of the campaign. What is more, the events have lasting repercussions on the setting that generate ripples of influence throughout the setting. This is known as the "Butterfly Effect"—a butterfly flaps its wings in one part of the world, moving air that then moves other air currents, shifting a warmer stream into a colder stream, generating effects, until this chain of dominos can affect the weather on the other side of the world. The smallest events have effects upon larger and more distant events.

While this is impossible to simulate in a game, it is an important principle to keep in mind when maintaining the campaign. Extrapolate the story events into campaign effects, because these campaign changes should and need to affect the story in turn.

6.1.2 IDENTIFYING SETTING CHANGES

There are any number of story events that can affect the campaign setting, some obvious; others less so. Some things to watch for:

Authority Changes—Have story events altered the balance of power? Deposed kings, defrauded nobles, defrocked priests, lauded heroes and even re-elections can affect the authority structure in the campaign. Be sure to check the contacts of the PCs—if one of their opponents or proponents has been affected, it may affect the PCs in turn.

Political Actions—This can range from religious purges to war, and should be updated in the setting. Typically events such as these are hard to miss, and will likely be an integral part of the campaign to begin with, but remember to update the latest changes.

Local Events—Smaller events should not be ignored. If the significant contacts of the PCs are affected in some way, it will affect the role playing and familiarity of the PCs with the setting. Don't forget that the PCs are not the only influencing factors in the lives of your NPCs. The cobbler may have someone extorting money from him and the PCs have no idea. If the sheriff's wife has just had a baby, he may not be available for a few days, or even weeks.

Structural Changes—This is a fairly rare occurrence. If something affects the very fabric of society or even game mechanics, be sure to extrapolate those effects. If some large scale event has affected the use of magic, what will happen to that mage society, or the Mage's Guild that sells spells for gold? Large scale events should always be checked for local effects.

More important than trying to maintain an entire world in every detail is to examine what the story currently requires. If you need to know troop movements within the Empire for the next session, then focus your attention on the details affecting such things. More to the point, if you *require* a certain event, then you will need to take a holistic view of the setting to determine a plausible reason for such an event to occur. Avoiding a sense of contrivance is vital, to avoid raising flags of disbelief.

Don't forget that the setting operates in both scopes, just as the story does. If you require a certain event for story purposes, you can insert it and fill in the reasons later, letting players think about the reasons even as you are devising them. Just be sure to justify it.

6.2 UPDATING THE CAMPAIGN

6.2.1 THE ART OF TRIAGE

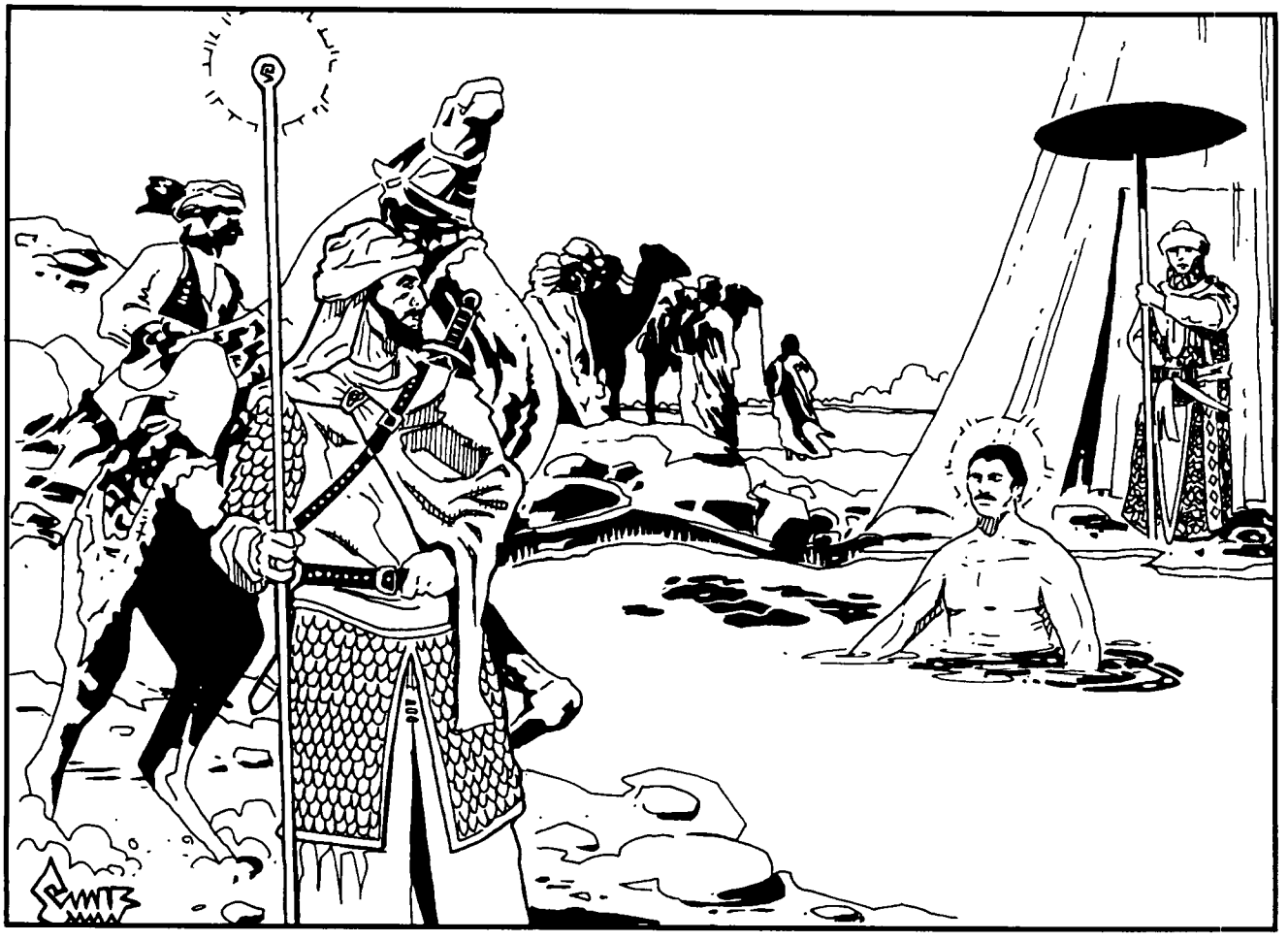
As the amount of information required to fully describe a world is impossible to achieve, a GM must determine what to even attempt to detail in the setting and story. In addition, the time between sessions may not allow the GM to fully address the issues he might wish before the next session. The art of triage, or determining priorities for available resources, must be utilized in order to maximize consistency and creative resources.

PC Issues

Issues directly affecting the PCs must have priority over other issues. Players will always press for information about their character, whether in regards to a new piece of equipment or a part of the background of the PC that has suddenly increased in significance. If you present a situation in which the player needs to know something about his character, be prepared to respond to player inquiries regarding the issue. Remember that the player will feel that he cannot properly portray the character if there are important elements that the PC would know but are being withheld from the player for some reason. Unless it is a central plot device, focus on providing PC information first.

NPC Issues

Usually second in importance are NPC issues. Remember that NPCs are *your* characters, and major NPCs deserve a great deal of consideration in making them seem alive and consistent. If you have done something that affects the background of an NPC, especially if it falls outside the scope of the current story, be sure to address this at least briefly to reconcile it to the current character. As with players above, if there are things the NPC would know that you, as the GM, are unaware of, it is going to be more



difficult to portray the NPC properly. While you cannot know *everything* about an NPC, you need to have a firm grasp on the elements that drive the NPC at this point in the game and story.

And do not hamstring your NPCs by failing to detail their personal equipment. If you have an NPC carrying a powerful artifact or item, then detail it and have him use it! NPCs should be using all of the resources at their command, unless there is some explicit reason why they are not. If a PC had a wand of *Fireballs* you can be quite sure he would be using it. If an NPC has one as well, would he not be using it? The same applies to political contacts, economic influence, or whatever other advantages the NPC may have available.

Setting Issues

Finally, address any new setting issues that may have come up. As most of these changes occur in the actual scope, they are not as pressing as maintaining the visible scope. If you have foreshadowed a new setting, or have indicated a change in some policy of a nation in your campaign, it may not need to be detailed immediately, but it should be attended to before too much time has passed. Because these changes may impact other areas of the scope (both actual and visible), it is important to pin them down before the side effects must appear within the story, or you will have to improvise results without balancing them within the story and setting, and backtracking usually takes more effort than extrapolation.

6.2.2 TAKING CUES FROM THE STORY

A story will often begin to take on a life of its own. It will demand certain elements be added to it and will demand others be removed. As you begin to explore it, a story about the kidnapping and ransom of a king may begin to evolve into an intrigue situation by the King's son. It will demand that more detail and sound reasoning be added to the motives behind the kidnapping. It will demand NPCs with certain influences and contacts. It will demand that you invent an isolated locale in which to hide the King during his incarceration. Be alert to these story cues and utilize them. The very best stories begin to write themselves, so don't fight it! Use those cues to expand on your setting, which will in turn breathe deeper and more meaningful life into the story.

Remember that none of these settings, NPCs or any other setting elements operate in a vacuum. When you see a discrepancy, attend to it! Few things are more satisfying than finding a discrepancy before a player does, bringing it to their attention within the story and then being able to explain it properly. Players are always alert for things that don't make sense or seem out of place. Leave those elements in place if you can explain them, so that when the players challenge those elements, you can show them what is going on.

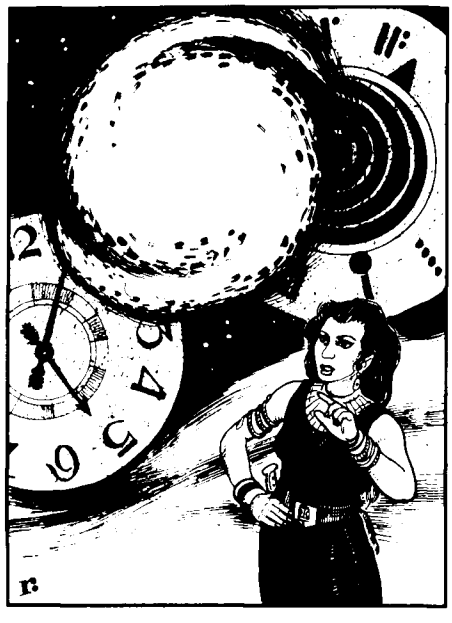
6.2.3 TAKING CUES FROM THE PLAYERS

This is really nothing more than being alert to the reactions of your players. When in session, do your players tend to be more interested in one element of the story? Can you determine whether that is due to the story elements or to the setting? Many times a setting intrigues a player because of a book they have read, a movie they saw, a campaign idea of their own they had... and sometimes it is simply their favorite type of setting element. If your players enjoy a particular type of setting, you should try to provide it to them if possible. If they prefer desert nomad adventures, and you've placed them on a planet locked in an ice age and covered by glaciers, you are doing everyone involved a disservice if you don't allow some flex. For one-shot adventures, fine. But don't force players into settings they don't enjoy and keep them there.

6.2.4 MAINTAINING THE CAMPAIGN CHRONOLOGY

Events in the background of a campaign add depth and flavor to your story, so try to keep a running set of things occurring behind the scenes but visible to the PCs. Political events, celebrations, holidays, royal marriages, parades, war parties, and more can all be happening and need have nothing to do with the present story. But the verisimilitude of such details help to convince the players that this is a living and breathing world through which they are taking their characters.

The campaign chronology is an important part of this process. Make a list of interesting and unique events to introduce, and be sure to interrelate them when appropriate (e.g., the Prince marries the Duchess of Hevros, and when they return from the honeymoon, declares a week of celebration throughout the realm.). When the date of the current session reaches these events, insert them into the story. More important, allude to them in the story beforehand. Having villagers talk excitedly about the upcoming Solstice Festival provides enormous amounts of role playing, and gives the PCs events around which to plan their own activities. The world rarely cares what the individual is doing, it will go on regardless. If you want your world to feel the same way to the PCs, you need to have an idea of what the world is doing!



6.3 EXTRAPOLATION

Extrapolation is perhaps the most important part of campaign maintenance. Here you will decide on where your game is going overall, what major changes need to be made and what new stories you will be developing.

6.3.1 DEVELOPING NEW SETTINGS

This can take two forms: completely new settings and further detail of prior settings left unfinished.

There may be times when your PCs will travel to other continents, worlds, or planes. If your PCs have easy access to effective travel, you might find your ability to create entirely new settings outstripped before too long. Obviously, you cannot build a new world every time your players hop on a plane or starship. Consider whether this new locale is likely to become the new core area or not. If so, then you may well have to spend a good deal of effort bringing it up to speed and detail. If this requires a brief hiatus from the game to complete to your satisfaction, then go ahead... your players will thank you for it. If the area is likely to be only a temporary stopping place, then treat it like any temporary locale in the story... throw in some specific details to give the PCs something to sink their teeth into and wing the rest of it.

More often, however, you will find the PCs ready to explore an area that has been alluded to and hinted at in the present or previous stories. At this point, all of your record-keeping will serve you well, because you will want to remain consistent to whatever you have previously defined about the area. The means of expanding these areas has already been discussed in the section on campaign design.

More important, though, is that you be aware of the possibility and need of these future settings as early as possible in your game. The sooner you can begin to set the stage for them, the better they will mesh with the story... or the better the new story will mesh with the old. When you switch settings, if it is too abrupt, the feeling to the players will be that they have suddenly entered a new game entirely, and unless that is your intent, you want to avoid that. The sense of continuity needs to remain strong to maintain the identification with their characters, and transition points are vital in this regard. Look ahead in the game and identify possible future avenues, and introduce elements when you can. For example, have a native of the other continent (or world) appear as an NPC. Drop tastes of the customs and flavor of the new setting, and give the PCs things to look for when they arrive. If they know that every city is built around a Grand Fountain where all of the city children come to play, that is a palpable landmark that can help to center the PCs in their new surroundings. Without such things to "lock onto", PCs may wander aimlessly, retreating finally to the old 'We go to the tavern and listen for news' method of acclimating to a new town. Give the PCs a contact, or a location, or *something* that will seem familiar to them upon their arrival, and the transition will not drag or be overly abrupt.

THE SESSION

The session is defined as the short period of time in which the gaming group convenes to allow the story to unfold. The session is made of three components: the GM, the cast, and the environment. The GM is discussed throughout this book. This section discusses the other two components.

7.1 THE CAST

There are two aspects to the cast of any gaming group: the players and the characters they play. Each must be prepared successfully before the game begins. See Section 2.0 for further detail on the players. See Section 3.0 for more detail on the characters.

7.1.1 FINAL CHARACTER PREPARATION

This is easy. Simply make sure that each character has a reason to be involved with the group. Do not make these ties too tight (or things will seem too contrived), or too loose (the character has to have more than one reason to be around). If necessary, run each character individually until you come to a point in the story where you can bring all the characters together.

Finally, make sure that each player has a correct and current copy of his character (and everything that character needs). If possible, have each player provide you (the GM) a copy of his character (so you can best prepare your stories to meet the needs of that character). It is also nice to have each player outline short-term and long-term goals for their characters (there may be no long-term goals initially). These goals should be updated periodically so you can tailor your stories to make sure you are allowing for completion of goals for each character (remember that what you as the GM consider fulfilling and complete may not be so for the players).

Note: *You should never allow a character to enter your game if you have not examined that character and approved it for appropriateness in your gaming world. You must understand every aspect of a character before approving him. Otherwise, the player may surprise you with that Sword of Vorpal Holy Slaying that was written on his equipment list!*

7.1.2 FINAL PLAYER PREPARATION

If the characters are ready, the players are ready, right? Wrong. It goes further than that.

Make sure each player knows who each of the other players are. You should not try and surprise your players by not revealing who the other players are! Inevitably, you will discover that Player A and Player B are enemies in real life (see Group Control below for the types of things that can happen here!) and will not want to play with each other. Make sure that everyone knows the date and time for the starting session. Finally, make sure that each player knows your house rules (see Section 2.0 for more on house rules).



7.2 BEGINNING YOUR GAME

You have prepared your stories, worked with the player to create an interesting set of characters. You have designed and populated a unique setting for the stories to unfold within. Now it is time to start playing...

7.2.1 THE GAMING ENVIRONMENT

Before your first session, there is at least one important question you must answer: Where are you going to play?

This is not as trivial a question as it may seem. The answer should not be: "Anywhere we can." Instead, some thought should be put forth as to the location of each gaming session. The reason that the gaming environment is so important is easy: distractions. You want to reduce the number of things that distract the player's attention as much as possible. Most distractions come from the gaming environment. Some typical distractions brought on by the gaming environment include: televisions (and video games), telephones, pedestrian traffic, non-game related noise (including washing machines, small children, animals, etc.). All of these elements can be just distracting enough to cause a critical description to be missed or require the GM to repeat important dialog.

There are two types of locations for gaming sessions: a permanent site and a changing site.

Permanent Sites

This is the best kind of site you can choose. It is usually the home of one of the players (or the GM). However, this type of site has inherent distractions. Namely, a television (sometimes with video game hook-ups) and a telephone. In addition, this type of site has other inherent problems. One person (or family) has to ensure that facilities are amenable to the group (bathroom is functioning, ice is available, etc.). That same person is usually responsible for clean-up (when the group forgets to clean up). Also, there is the question of food (and the messes that accompany it).

Of course, when you have a permanent site, some small distractions can be overcome (as the players become more familiar and comfortable with the environment). If you always play at the same place, players are not distracted by the "newness" of the place (this is always a problem when a new site is chosen; see below). In addition, house rules can overcome many of the common distractions (e.g., the TV stays off for the duration of the session).



When selecting a fixed site, try and select a location that is large enough for all the players in the game (plus the GM). You should also remember that your gaming group might grow, so project a little into the future and guess how large the gaming group will be then. Take into account the size of each player (e.g., small players do not need as much room). Make sure that the lightning is appropriate (usually, you want adequate, non-glare lightning). Seating should be comfortable if you are playing for more than an couple of hours (e.g., make sure the seats are cushioned). If sitting around a table, make sure that all players can get in and out easily (e.g., the player on the inside does not have to crawl under the table to get out, or have to make five other people get out). Each player should be able to access all of the "stuff" they need (this might include space for books, miniatures, etc.). Remember that the GM usually requires the space of two players. The bathroom and the food should be easy to get to for everyone. Finally, the temperature should be comfortable (not too cold or too hot).

Changing Sites

There are two reasons to have a changing site: because one person (or family) does not want the responsibility of providing amenities to all the players, or because you have no choice. It is completely reasonable to share the responsibility for providing amenities by rotating the site of the gaming session through several players' homes. If the number of different sites is relatively low, players (and the GM) will adapt relatively quickly to the different environments.

However, if everyone lives in small efficiency apartments, you may be relegated to playing at any site available, or at least some more undesirable sites. If this is the case, prepare your sessions appropriately. This may mean designing stories that handle interruption well. For example, you do not want to run a high intrigue type of game (where the smallest detail is important) if you are relegated to playing in the cafeteria of a dormitory (where there is a reasonable chance of being interrupted every half-hour).

There are many things you can do to minimize the effects of distractions at an undesirable site. The first is to make sure you have as much seclusion as possible within the site (e.g., the quietest corner of the game store). In addition, you should customize your stories (see above). Another technique is to reduce the number of players that you run at a time (e.g., do not try and manage a group of eight players, if you must play in the halls of your local high school during your lunch hour).

Eventually, you should try and find a more permanent location to run your games. Here are some places to try that you might not have thought of: a gaming room at your local hobby/game store (if your local store doesn't have one, maybe they can set aside some place for you to play), a conference room in a local library (many libraries will allow usage of these rooms to patrons), a secluded classroom in the local high school/college (most will require some sort of faculty member to vouch for the gaming group—get some instructors involved in your game), or local community centers (these sometimes have deposits required on the facilities, but this is refunded if the facilities are returned in good shape—take up a collection).

7.2.2 ORGANIZATION

Now you have a place to play, you have a cadre of players, and you are ready to begin... Not quite.

There are numerous, non-game related preparations you should take care of. You need to make sure that arrangements have been made for food breaks (if you are playing across a meal time). It is not uncommon to share the responsibility for session snacks among all the players (in some groups everyone simply brings what they want to munch on, some groups rotate the snack responsibilities). House rules need to be set up for what to do with latecomers or no-shows. You will observe of preparations as your campaign progresses.

However, there are also, many game-related preparations that you should make. For example, do you know which direction the characters are most likely to go in this session (this includes plot movement, not just travel)? If so, are you ready for the directions the party will go (major NPCs detailed enough, monster stats available, areas mapped out, etc.)?

One important type of preparation that a GM can utilize is the player handout. This includes anything that the player gets to handle and manipulate. One of these is worth a hundred descriptions. When you give the player something tangible, he will look at it, examine it, and think about it (all of the above can reduce environment distractions greatly). Examine the direction the party is heading. Is there any kind of handout that you can make for the upcoming session? This could be anything from a simple note that is delivered to the party to a complex prophecy found in an ancient tome. Or perhaps they will find a stack of tiles with strange runes on them (make up replicas of the tiles on paper and cut them out).

7.3 GROUP CONTROL

Group control is defined as controlling the ways in which the players interact with the story.

7.3.1 REQUIREMENTS

When a group gets out of control, the players start to pay more attention to the other players (not their characters) and begin to lose interest in the story. To avoid this, the group must be controlled.

7.3.2 PROBLEMS

Before discussing the problems of group control, it should be pointed out that what is a problem in one gaming group might not be a problem in another gaming group. For example, in some games, the GM needs everyone participating at the same level and there should be little (or no) discussion of non-game related topics during a session. In other games, the players (and the GM) might enjoy the relaxed social atmosphere of gaming and not mind topic drifts from time to time.

When trying to assert control over a gaming group (which consists of one or more players), some major problems are evident. The largest of which is: "How to get the group under control, and still keep the game fun?" Other possible problems include personal confrontations (between GM and players as well as between players), out of game relationships, and sense of contrivance.

Control versus Fun

This is the largest problem to overcome. If you start to insert control mechanisms into your game, the players will struggle against them (usually) and/or they will feel constrained. In some cases, it becomes more work to play the game than the amount of fun derived from playing it.

Other Common Problems

What happens when a boyfriend and girlfriend come to a session and they get into a quarrel (in character) because they are mad at each other (out of character)? What happens when a player openly challenges your authority as the GM (e.g., "You are wrong... I am right"). What happens when a control mechanism results in some contrived situations (e.g., a house rules results in a bad situation for a character). All of these are very real problems that you can easily come across in most games.

7.3.3 SOLUTIONS

There are two types of control techniques that GM can use to control his group: Active and Passive. Some GMs are more comfortable with one than the other. Some GMs have a personality more suited for Active techniques and other have a personality more suited for Passive techniques. The best GMs will utilize some aspects of both techniques.

Active Group Control

Active control techniques are generally easy and obvious to implement. However, it does require that the GM be willing, ready, and able to stand firm. Decisions will have to be enforced with penalties (or punishments).

Some typical Active techniques include defining some problem situations that might occur in you game and then defining what will happen when that situation occurs. For example, you might decide that all non-game related discussion has to occur out of ear-shot of the gaming table. Participating in a non-game related discussion results in a polite request to take the discussion elsewhere; or end the discussion immediately. However, when this situation comes up in the session, the GM had better be ready to enforce the rule, or the group will slowly spiral out of control. In addition, the players will begin to lose trust in the GM.

Perhaps the most common Active technique used to control the group is for the GM to simply jump out of character (and out of game context) and reprimand the players involved. However, this requires a personality that is comfortable in commanding others to behave (some people are very uncomfortable with this and would never resort to such techniques).

Active techniques provide the most immediate results. However, the sacrifice is that you must briefly halt the story in order to implement or enforce the technique. For example, if a boyfriend and girlfriend get into an argument, simply ask them to step outside (or away from the game) to resolve the situation.

Passive Group Control

Passive techniques result in the players policing themselves until they are under control. While this sounds difficult (or perhaps impossible) it is not. The best way to achieve this kind of effect is to make the player's actions directly relate to "game" actions. The most obvious example of this is that every time a player talks, you assume he is talking in character and you respond (from NPCs) in character.

However, it doesn't stop there. When a player learns that because he was talking to his friend about the movie last night he did not get a chance to ask the Commander for extra special equipment, he will pay more attention next time (so as to not miss another opportunity). Or when a player who is constantly disrupting the game with out of character comments is overlooked in the next batch of promotions handed out by the captain of the guard, perhaps he will focus on staying in character more.

Another common Passive technique is to remove all time-telling devices from the room where you are hosting the session. By doing so, you remove the concept of "real" time from the obvious perception and the players can more easily focus on "game" time. As time passes in the game world, the players will be more oblivious to time passing in the real world.

As you can imagine, it is difficult to master Passive techniques. As a GM, you can avoid most personal confrontations, but you have to avoid a feeling of contrivance (e.g., "I didn't get promoted because I was talking to Mary?! You've got to be kidding). You have to be very careful to keep everything within the context of the game. Do not let the players try and convince you with "out of character" arguments. Simply remind them that they must play in character to get the same rewards as everyone else.

7.3.4 CONCLUSIONS

As in most things, there is never just one correct way to solve these problem. What we have presented here are some guidelines to use when starting to solve problems. They are particularly helpful if you have no idea how to address the situation that has arisen in your game. Remember that no technique will work every time in all situations. You must be ready to adapt and have a lot of empathy with the player(s) involved so that you can determine the best way to implement Group Control in your game.

7.4 PRESENTATION

You have designed an incredibly interesting story, you have laced it into a complex campaign, and have assembled a phenomenal group of players. But all is for naught if you cannot present the story well. The converse is also true, the most poorly designed story, in a very dull campaign, with ho-hum players can thrive if presented well.

Presentation will make or break a game. All of the other factors (having the right number of players, designing interesting stories, integrating it all into a campaign, proper preparation, etc.) will help a game; but no game will survive without at least adequate presentation. This section discusses some of the intricate techniques that you can (and probably already) use when presenting your story. In almost all cases, presentation refers to "in session" techniques.

7.4.1 SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Subjective perspective is defined as presentation of information in different ways to each player (or groups of players). This is a technique that is commonly used by GMs to present information.

This technique provides excellent tension and realistic reactions from players. This is because every player (or group of players) is working with slightly different information (none of which is individually complete). This results in everyone reacting to scenes in ways that their characters should (as very few people can actually perceive every single detail around them—they only perceive that which is important to them).

There are basically four different ways to use this technique. Locational Perspective is when you skew a description based upon the physical location of the character(s). Personality Perspective is when you skew a description based upon the personality of the character viewing a scene (i.e., some people notice some types of things in a scene, while others notice different things). NPC Perspective is used primarily when an NPC is conveying information (remember that NPCs have their own perspective and see/remember only the things that they deem important). Secret knowledge is a variation on Personality Perspective where specific information is given to only a single character and that information must then be conveyed to the rest of the group (via that character, not the GM).

Note: *Each of the sub-sections below uses the same scene and setting. The PCs are in a coastal city. Three of them have gone into town while the other two are negotiating passage on a ship. While in town, the three PCs discover an old nemesis and begin chasing him towards the docks (in hopes of catching him there). The scene begins with the enemy's arrival on the dock. His general plan of action is to get to his ship and activate a magical item that will summon an extra-planar bodyguard. His ship happens to be next to the ship the PCs are trying to book passage on.*

Locational Perspective

Anytime a new scene is begun, you should examine the location of each character. Are there distinct groups that can perceive the scene in different ways? If so, you should provide separate descriptions based upon the different locations. Because these types of scene descriptions are often lengthy, you will most likely have to give each group the description in private. After providing the initial description, you can put the groups back together and resolve the events of the scene. The initial description will provide fuel for the character's actions. However, as questions come up about the scene, be sure to not provide information that was not globally available (you will probably want players to ask their questions in private or write them down—so you can provide further descriptions and/or answers in private).

The example below demonstrates how the same scene can be described in three different ways. Note that each group sees something slightly different than the next.



Example: *Blackoak and Kiltran are standing on the deck of the Black Witch negotiating passage to the southern jungles. Their negotiations are interrupted when a large stack of crates topples a little ways up the dock. A man in black leather armor stands up (maybe he toppled the crates in his haste). He looks vaguely familiar to Blackoak and Kiltran, but no specific features can be made out on the man (from this distance). The man scans the ships quickly and then begins running in towards Blackoak and Kiltran. As he starts to move towards them, they realize that this is their long-time nemesis, Fang. Fang is pulling an ivory rod from his belt as he runs...*

Aurum was dodging barrels, wagons, and people as Fang just evaded his grasp again. Aurum could hear Kyle and Tendrill behind him, but he was the fastest and was the one who would catch Fang. Aurum leaped over another barrel as Fang toppled a tower of fruit crates. As Aurum leaped over the crates, he could see Fang running for his ship, the Silver Falcon (and a crew is just beginning to notice the ruckus). But luck was with Aurum today. Sitting at the same pier (but on the other side) was the Black Witch. Blackoak and Kiltran were there...

Kyle and Tendrill struggled to say up with Aurum, but Aurum was more agile and quick. As they reached the corner, they could see that an old woman was pinned under the fallen crates; pears were mostly obscuring the whimpering women. Across the docks, the harbor master was calling for the guard...

Personality Perspective

Different people see things differently. This is not because they are actually seeing a different thing, but because certain things are more important than other things to different people. Because these types of descriptions are simple modifications to a global description, you can usually provide these descriptions with whispered (or written) description. In this case, simply describe the main aspect of the object, then provide each character with their take on it.

For example, a seedy looking street thug approaches the PCs. The mercenary soldier PC might note the sword the NPC is carrying and any other weapons he might have. The thief might note a key hanging on a chain around the NPC's neck. The healer might note the man's limp being indicative of having a prosthetic foot. While someone else might notice the stud in the NPC's ear is in the shape of a seven -pointed star.

The example below shows a detailed sample of how a description can be tailored to the personality of each character. It is presumed that the PCs have captured Fang and are on the deck of his ship. The GM has already given a general description of Fang, but each character observes some different aspect of their nemesis.

Example: *<To Blackoak> You see that Fang is beginning to sweat. The beads are rolling down his cheek and across the long scar there. He has a look of fear in his eyes, but you do not think he fears anything you can do to him...*

<To Kiltran> You notice the bundled up falconry gear tied onto Fang's belt. Suddenly you notice a flock of sea birds take flight...

<To Aurum> You observe that the greave on Fang's left arm is not like the one on the right. It is a specially crafted archer's greave on his left arm. However, you see no sign of a bow (or arrows) on his person...

<To Kyle> The hilt of Fang's sword is obviously of Thraiden craftsmanship. You also recognize that there are several slashes in his hardened leather armor; similar to slashes a whip would make on skin...

<To Tendrill> You are quick to notice that Fang has a small knife blade in the sole of his boot. In addition, the cuff of his pants are hanging very heavy (as if something is sewn into them).

The NPC's Perspective

Anytime information is to be given to the PCs through an NPC, be sure to present the information from the NPC's point of view. Remember that the NPC has interests and personality and will notice different types of things (see Personality Perspective above). In addition, he is not omniscient (most likely) and will have viewed the object or scene from a particular place. Somethings were probably not noticed or obvious to the NPC.

In the example below, the PCs and the harbor master are talking to the city guard about the events that transpired on the dock.

Example: *"I seems to recall seeing that young, burly guy (pointing at Aurum) knocking over dem crates. I hope that Hildy Miggers will be okay. She's pretty bad hurt ya know (he glares at Aurum). Then arrows started flying and people started running. I wuz at the far end of the docks trying to get Nik (points to the city guard) to hurry. Then some kinda explosion happened! Sounded like lightning! (look of awe) Wood bits was raining from the sky. All I know is that ever since that Blackoak fella came and talked to me... things been screwy around here."*



Secret Knowledge

Anytime that a single PC should know something that the rest of the group should not know (either from a skill or some aspect of their background), you should always provide that information to the player *privately*. This creates a situation where that player must decide what is important and/or relevant to the current situation. For the rest of the group to discover this information, they must interact with that player. This almost always results in interesting and powerful role playing.

In the example below, it is presumed that the PCs have locked Fang in the hold of their ship (to be taken to the King for trial) and that they have found Fang's falcon. Blackoak (an animal specialist) has spells to communicate with the bird. The GM is standing just outside the room. The player playing Blackoak is standing in the doorway of the room. The rest of the players are still sitting around the table. The nature of the spell is such that everyone can understand Blackoak as he speaks to the bird, but only Blackoak can understand the answers.

Example: *<Blackoak> What is your name?*

<Bird> Master called me Slasher.

<Blackoak> Are you hungry?

<Bird> Yes. There were no rats today.

Blackoak feeds the bird some meat scraps. The rest of the group is getting impatient. Kyle say "Ask him about Fang's master. Who was he afraid of?"

<Blackoak, to the bird> Who was the master of your master?

<Bird> I do not understand.

<Blackoak> You serve your master and he feeds you. Who did your master serve? Who fed him?

<Bird> The man in white (and who always smelled of whiskey) fed Master.

<Kyle> "What did he say?"

<Blackoak, to Kyle> I cannot seem to get the bird to understand that his master served someone else.

<Aurum> Ask him who beat his master?

<Blackoak, to the bird> Did you ever see someone strike your master?

<Bird> Yes.

<Blackoak> What did he look like? Did your master ever call him by name?

<Bird> He was a man. He smelled sweet like a melon. Master called him Chand.

<Tendrill> Well? Who is it!?

The player playing Blackoak turns slowly. "It is Chand...."

7.4.2 COMMUNICATION

In presentation, communication is the key to everything. A GM must be able to communicate his ideas and stories, or the game will fail. A GM must be able to convey all of the elements in every scene, or the players will never know what is going on. However, there are many tricks to *effective* communication that are discussed below.

Verbal Communication

The primary form of communication that a GM will use is speaking. Therefore, a GM must have an adequate command of his language. He should not use words that he cannot exactly define; otherwise, players may be confused trying to envision one thing when another was intended. Choose your words carefully when describing a scene.

Diction is also important. Learn to speak clearly. In many ways, you are like an actor. You must learn to deliver your lines in a clear and distinct fashion. Players should rarely have to say "Huh? What was that?" when you are describing a scene.

Various methods of vocal delivery should also be used. When speaking as an NPC commander, the GM should adopt a commanding voice. When speaking as the mousy little boy, he should adopt a timid, and soft-spoken voice. Remember that when you are delivering lines as an NPC, never repeat a statement, just because the players were not listening! If they were not listening, their character's were not listening! If asked to repeat the statement, repeat it... in character (and perhaps slightly differently than before).

But do not limit your vocal deliveries to NPC voices. Learn to use different styles of speech for different occasions. When describing a grand battle, increase your tone and pace of speech. When describing a dark and sinister hallway, lower your voice to a whisper... making your players strain to hear every word.

A note should be made about players writing stuff down. Different GMs have different opinions on letting players write down everything that happens, while it happens. Some GMs will not let players write things down unless their characters are writing the same information down. However, it is our experience that this is impractical. Because players are not actually experiencing the events in the game, and because they are not living the experiences 24 hours a day, they should be allowed to take at least some kind of notes about what is happening during the session. But be careful that you do not allow them to take dictation when NPC are speaking (unless the characters are doing so). This can ruin a great scene, as you have to keep repeating and talking slowly (though the NPC may talk quickly and with slurred speech).

Gestures and Expressions

Two of the most common supplemental ways of communication are gestures and expressions. The gestures (or motions with your hands and/or body) can emphasize a point or draw attention to an aspect of a scene. For example, the holy warrior may raise his sword above his head as he delivers his soliloquy. The GM would raise his hands high above his head and give the speech. However, do not limit gestures to only dramatic moments. Each NPC might have some simple gesture that becomes their trademark. For example, Grundy the dwarf always pinches his nose when he is thinking; Schell the little girl is constantly bobbing her head; etc. It is wonderful when a player recognizes which NPC is speaking, simply by the gestures the GM uses when delivering the speech.

Expressions can be just as important. A GM should learn how to convey mood and emotion through facial expression. Once this talent is mastered, very subtle meanings can be conveyed. A short speech can have double meaning if the words say one thing, but the speaker's expression betrays others. In addition, the players begin to understand the feelings of the NPCs involved. Try to imagine the sorrow in the eyes of a doomed warrior, or the apathy in a little boy's face as he does his chores, or the relief of a man pulled from the sea who is too tired to speak. All of these elements can become weapons to deliver powerful and meaningful emotion and mood.

The best way to learn how to use gestures and expressions is to examine the people around you in everyday life. Notice the way that people's faces move when they are talking. Notice the way that different people use their hands, arms, and body to convey meaning when they are talking. Notice all this; and then use it in your game!

Other Communication Assistance

GMs will discover other tools and tricks that he can use to enhance his communication. A trick that is often used is the sound effect. How does an old, creaky door sound as it opens? Or the sound of a squirrel darting through the underbrush? A GM should listen to life around him and try to mimic some of the sounds. Every sound you can learn to make is one more step to realism in your game.

Another common tool that can be used is a prop. There are all kinds of props for all kinds of games. Basically a prop is anything that represents a tool or object that actually used during the game. For example, if a character has a childhood photograph of his parents, give the player a photograph to carry around. It does not matter what the photograph is of, it is a prop; a tool used to draw the player into his character. Another kind of prop might be a broom handle; used by the GM as a mace in one scene, a sword in another scene, and the hermit's twisted staff in yet another. Also, do not forget that the tables and chairs are excellent props! Rearrange the chairs so they represent the seating at the council; or use extra chairs as a wall or barrier that is in the scene. Also, use physical layouts of your gaming environment to your advantage! If the characters are separated in the game, put the players in different rooms of the house.

There are other elements you can use to enhance your communication. For example, a good map of the area is worth a thousand words of description. The message from the Duke can actually be written down and rolled up. If the party is going to find an old, crumpled map sewn into the garments of a rotting corpse; draw out the map, crumple it up, and then put it in your shoe the entire day before the gaming session (nobody will want to touch the map then!).

7.4.3 PROTOCOLS AND ETIQUETTES

There are many techniques that you can use during your gaming sessions to help improve the quality of role playing during the session. As these techniques become routine and standard, they are called protocols. When a technique is adopted to provided structure, this is known as etiquette.

For example, instituting the technique (or rule) that no one speaks while the GM is describing a scene is a example of an etiquette that is commonly found in most games. Requiring all conversations to be "in character" is a perfect example of a protocol that improves role playing in a session. This section discuss common protocols and etiquettes as well as their implications on a gaming session.

Staying in Character

"Staying in character" means that the players (and the GM) do not let the outside (real) world encroach upon the events happening in the game. Getting players to stay in character during a session is a common goal for GMs. However, the steps to take to ensure that this occurs may not be so obvious.

The first (and most obvious) step to take is to institute the rule that anything a player says in conversation is said "in character." This is a great first step, but many players will simply resort to a non-conversational approach to gaming. A better protocol to institute is to never allow a player to say, "I ask the guard about the disturbance this morning." Instead, the GM should take on the role of the guard and require the player to ask him about it; exactly as his

character would! While this may appear to take a lot of time away from story progressing events in the game, the net result is realistic and satisfying role playing. As you become more adept at this technique, you will learn which scenes need this protocol and which scenes do not.

Another way to help players stay in character is to give them (or have them supply) props for the session. Anything tangible that belongs to the character can be simulated with a prop. The prop helps to player to remember to stay in character and often draws him deeper into his character.

Verbal Implication

Verbal implication is the art of making players react realistically to a scene, based upon the implications that GM has provided in his descriptions and narrative. Verbal implication is one of the best protocols a GM can use to create good role playing in a session. In its simplest form, verbal implication is simply information about a scene.

"You see a very large and powerful troll."

The implications are: the troll is powerful and therefore dangerous to fight.

As you become more adept at using verbal implication, you can cause strong emotional reactions from the players that cause them to make (realistic) mistakes in the game.

"The terrible beast steps down the corridor. The walls are collapsing behind it. Only the light from your torch remains. You are trapped in this dead end passage! You can feel your pulse throbbing in your head. For a moment, you stand looking upon the beast's deadly form. Its jaws gape open, threatening to tear you apart. Your thoughts finally come back to you and begin searching for a vulnerable spot to strike. The beast is coming closer..."

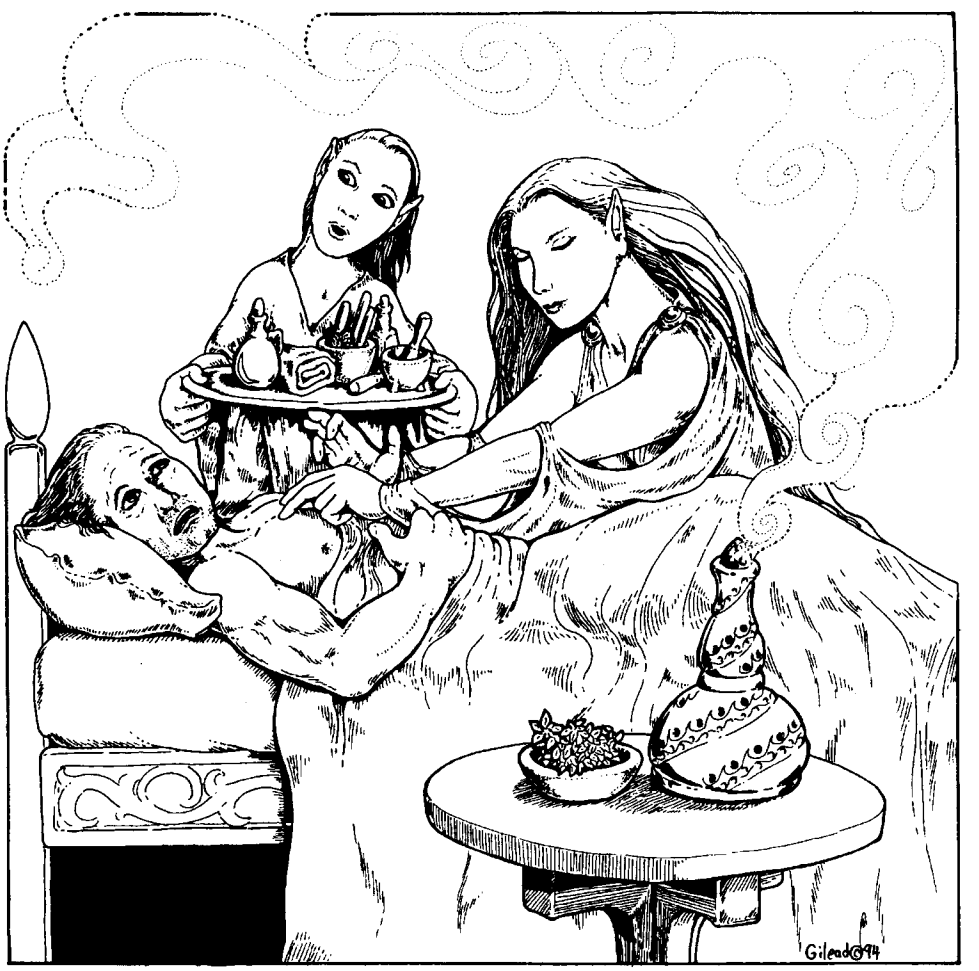
The above narrative is simple, but full of verbal implication. After this description, the player should be genuinely concerned for his survival! Fear (and emotion) should be creeping into his thought processes. Notice that all descriptions (above) are based upon the perspective of the character; this is powerful when combined with verbal implication.

Do not restrict your verbal implication to situations of fear and awe. This technique can be used to invoke any type of emotion (sadness, love, hate, etc.). For example, imagine a scene where a PC's wife enters the room and has a short discourse with the PC. Another PC does not like the wife and thinks she is a spy. Use the following narrative for the espoused PC.

Your lovely wife enters the room. The sunlight plays off of her hair, giving it a sparkle. Her smile is warming as she enters the room. "My husband!" She kisses you on the cheek. "I have news from the Duke. We have been invited to the ball!"

Use the following narrative for the suspicious PC.

You see her enter the room. Her moves are smooth like those of a snake. Her smile in almost venomous. She embraces her husband and whispers something in his ear. Then confidently announces, "We have been invited to the ball!"



Remember to deliver the narratives privately. The net results is that emotions and feelings are maintained and the players react in realistic fashions to the scene. The suspicious PC will continue to try and convince the husband that the wife is a spy. While the husband continually reminds the other PC that he is just suspicious and paranoid.

Another great tool to use in verbal implication is whispering. Simply by providing a description or narrative in a whisper, you have implied that there is a reason to whisper (e.g., there might be danger near, even though no mention of danger was made in the description). Conversely, if you are talking in loud tones, you have implied a reason to speak loudly (e.g., the battles are ongoing in the war nearby).

You can also use NPC monologues to provide implication. An NPC can provide his own insights to a scene and convey his own emotions about a topic. For example, if something frightened the NPC, he can convey its nature and (hopefully) convince the PCs that the thing is frightening. The same goes for stalwart warriors who fear nothing. They can convey the certainty of victory. This is especially true when the PCs have come to know a particular NPC's nature. For example, if a particular NPC has been known for years as someone who never fears anything announces, "By dawn's chime, we will certainly feel the grip of death upon us," the players will immediately know the seriousness of the situation.

Another great tool is a monologue in which the GM reads some lost prophecy or curse that has been written down somewhere. Do not simply give a copy of the prophecy or curse for their own perusal (though you should do this); you should first read it aloud to the players. By doing this, you can use your own vocal inflections and diction to enforce feelings and emotions that you are trying to imply.

Reflexes

Reflexes are actions taken without thought. Unfortunately, a natural barrier exists between the player and his character. The character is imaginary and is only bonded to the player through his imagination. Emotions and reflexes are commonly filtered out through this type of bond. There are tricks and techniques that a GM can use to invoke emotion in players (and therefore their characters). However, reflexes are a different issue.

There are many times in a scene where a character should respond by reflex. Unfortunately, the player almost always dictates the actions, and more importantly, reactions for his character. In most cases, this results in unrealistic "reflex" actions for the character. Consider the following scene.

> *Two characters, Kendric and Jonril are walking along a ledge on a cliff. Jonril has a magical ring that will allow him to land safely after most falls, so he is not too nervous about the trek. However, Kendric (who is known for his poor luck) has to worry about each step. The GM makes some rolls and announces that Jonril has slipped and begins to tumble over the edge.*

At this point, the reflex action should be for Jonril to grab onto the nearest object to keep from falling. However, the player (thinking rationally) will obviously announce that he is not worried and simply fall. How do you (as the GM) overcome this?

Simple. Inform the player of his action. Do not give him the choice of rational behavior. If you think there is a chance of maintaining rational behavior, turn it into a roll. If you think a choice is available, give the player choices that are all irrational.

Your players will complain. Anytime you remove their choices, they will complain. But in the end, they will enjoy it more. Remember that we enjoy watching movies where the character's actions and reactions are real, or reading a book where the hero makes mistakes realistically. In the long run, your players will come to trust your judgement about reflexes (presuming that you do not abuse this right you have as a GM).

Dialogue

A dialogue is defined as a verbal exchange between two or more individuals. Dialogues are important for two reasons: to impart information and to enhance character development. Also, dialogue is a great way to encourage good role playing during a session. In a role playing session, there are three types of dialogues (though one is pretty rare): player character to NPC, player character to player character, and NPC to NPC. Each type has its own protocols.

In a PC to NPC dialogue, the players converse with the GM (or a designated player for the NPC). When this occurs, the GM should be careful to step fully into the role of the NPC (and provide only views and information that the character would have access to).

In a PC to PC dialogue, the player are talking (in character) with each other. The GM should try and keep an ear on the conversation so he can institute information shepherding when necessary (see below).

In a few rare occasions, the GM will have the need to role play a situation where two different NPCs converse with each other. These instances should be rare (as they are difficult to execute very well).

GMs should always be aware of dialogue occurring in the game. It is almost necessary to have an NPC available who can interject at crucial moments to redirect conversation or to provide further insight to a discussion. This technique can be used to fuel dialogues (i.e., keep them going). Fueling dialogues keeps a good role playing flow going during a session.

Revealing Information

Information is the key to everything. The more you know, the more you control. However, what happens when what you discover the information you know is not the truth. Power structures can be shaken to the ground in this fashion.

Players will constantly pursue answers. As a GM, you should freely give out answers—just not always correct ones. Correct answers should only be given if there is a reason to give it. If a player who has never been trained in demolitions asks the GM what kind of bomb was used in an explosion, the GM should feel free to provide whatever outlandish theories he likes; after all, the character has no understanding of what it takes (and that is what the player should understand). Only when the demolition expert asks the question should the truth be evident. This is all related to the subjective perspective of the character.

However, there are times when players incorrectly convey information. As a GM, you should be monitoring character conversations. If a player is attempting to talk about something that his character would know, but he (the player) has either forgotten or "mis-remembered", you should jump right in and correct him. Be warned that this should happen infrequently; because it is possible that the player is deliberately "misconstruing" the information. If you are not sure of the player's intent, wait for a break in the conversation (do not interrupt him) and quietly inform him of his mistake.

Another common mistake is made when players talk about things their character do not know about. Be careful that you do not allow players to be exchanging in character information that their characters do not have! Of course, it



is possible for characters to exchange ideas concerning things they know nothing about. However, you must ensure that the exchange of information in done in character; just as if the characters were doing it.

In Conclusion

It takes time to develop a good feel for proper etiquette and protocol. Do not loose faith when you seem to be floundering (you are probably doing better than you realize). Continue to use these techniques consistently and your players will grow to understand them and grow to trust you. Additionally Role playing experiences within the game become more involved. And this only serves to provide depth and richness to the story.

7.4.4 MASKING

Masking is a tool/technique used by GMs to disguise his intentions. By doing this, the GM can create environments where the players' reactions are more realistic. They are less likely to base decisions upon information that they possess (as opposed to what their characters' know).

The Art of Misdirection

In a role playing game, information is a resource that players will use again and again. They will attempt to know as much as possible about the situation before reacting to it (though sometimes you have to inform them that reflexes take over, see above). Very often, the players will let this use of the information resource slip into the real world. For example, if you are thumbing through a listing of creatures, the players may decide that it is time to have their characters check the edge on their weapons, or test the strength of their bow (just in case of course). They are using "real-world" information to make decisions for their characters.

There are two kinds of information that every player has: "in character" information (stuff his character knows) and "out of character" information (stuff he knows, but his character does not). Many role players do not have too much difficulty separating the two types of information; making sure that their character's reactions are based upon "character" information. However, even the best role players will have a difficult time pretending they do not know about a fatal/critical event. For example, if you overheard the GM tell one player that the sturdy looking ledge is actually an illusion (and whoever steps on it will plunge to their death), you would find a reason for your character to not step on the ledge.

That is when masking becomes necessary. With masking, you can make it much more difficult for the players to know which bits of information are "real" bits and which are not. For example, if you ask everyone in the group to make an Observation maneuver roll, they will know that there is something to see (and most likely something important). If you change the procedure so that you simply ask them to roll (and you have recorded their Observation skill bonus secretly), and you quickly calculate the totals, the players do not know for sure what they are rolling for.

Remember that the goal of masking is to "mislead" the players consistently. So that they do not trust their "out of character" knowledge. This results in a more realistic reaction in response to the story.

The Means of Misdirection

As your story unfolds, you will constantly be portraying information to the players (remembering that not all information is conveyed verbally). Very often, the simple fact that you are giving information provides information. For example, if you start describing an NPC in detail, the players will probably believe that this NPC is important.

One of the primary means of masking is through the use of subtle volume. When you use subtle volume, you are constantly bombarding the player with small bits of information that have nothing to do with the story. Thus, the players will have to react in a more realistic fashion (as anything could be important). For example, if you expend the same amount of energy describing all NPCs, the players will not know which ones are important.

Another technique used with masking is to constantly be rolling dice (many times for no reason at all). By rolling dice continuously, the players do not know when a dice roll is important. Similarly, have the players roll dice every now and then and pretend that this has some bearing on the story (though it actually does not). After you have done this a few times, you can ask for a dice roll when it actually does mean something and the players will not suspect.

One other aspect that is often overlooked in games is the routine element of day to day life in the game world. Very often, players will ignore the routine of day to day living so that their characters will never be put at risk. For example, if players had their way, their characters would never be caught with their pants down while tending to bodily functions. To overcome this, the GM should randomly (based upon some dice roll or another), have "nature call." However, have nothing happen. Simply inform the player that he feels the call of nature and he must go relieve himself. The same holds true for other types of day to day routines. For example, when camp is made at night, inform the players that the characters are too tired to make extensive camp preparations. Force them to be realistic and then have no bad results. Continue this in a consistent fashion and then the player will react more realistically when something does happen.

A harder technique to master is the use of secret information. Give out information to each player (individually) and convince him of the secret nature of the information. Players generally like the feeling the they are privy to knowledge that no one else knows. You can use this mechanism to have a vast store of information already in the party, but they must learn to put it all together. You can use subtle prompts and clues to try and get the players to make the connection. But be warned, players may never make the connection. If you story depends upon the connection, you had better be ready with some very strong shoves in the right direction.

Another technique to avoid using absolutes in your descriptions. Be using "grey" descriptions, you can use subjective perspectives to direct the flow of events without seeming contrived. For example, if the party is 100 feet from the most important room in the complex and you want them to fight the guardian creature; you should not describe the distance to the door as 100 feet. Instead, simple say it is a long way. This way, they cannot pull out some magic



item or spell that you were unprepared for. In addition, any information that the characters discover in the game should not necessarily be correct (remember that the NPC conveying the information has his own perspectives).

There are many places where masking can be used. As the GM, you should use any that you can to help hide your intentions. Remember that the players will always be using whatever information you convey, unless you train them to ignore those "out of character" impulses.

The Limits of Misdirection

However, there are limits. If you mask too much, the players will never have a feeling of accomplishment. They will constantly wonder what is going on the world. A good goal to set is for players to leave each game session with a new set of information to speculate on (and they should be relatively sure about the nature of the information). If you constantly hide all of the clues so that they cannot be found (even if this is realistic), the players will have nothing to speculate on and will loose interest in the game.

You should make sure that players get pieces to the puzzle at every session (or at least regularly). However, you can "misguide" the players for a while, and then "enlighten" one of them (so that they are seldom far from the correct path). The harder it seems to succeed, the more the players will enjoy succeeding; but never make it so hard that they give up.

Another limit that must be faced is time. If you have a gaming group that can only meet once per month, it will be difficult to enrich each scene with the same level of detail (so the players do not immediately recognize the important elements of the scene). You should recognize the limit of time and accept the fact that you will not be able to use a lot of the masking techniques described here (though some are still applicable). If your group meets more often, you can take you time with each scene element and mask them properly.

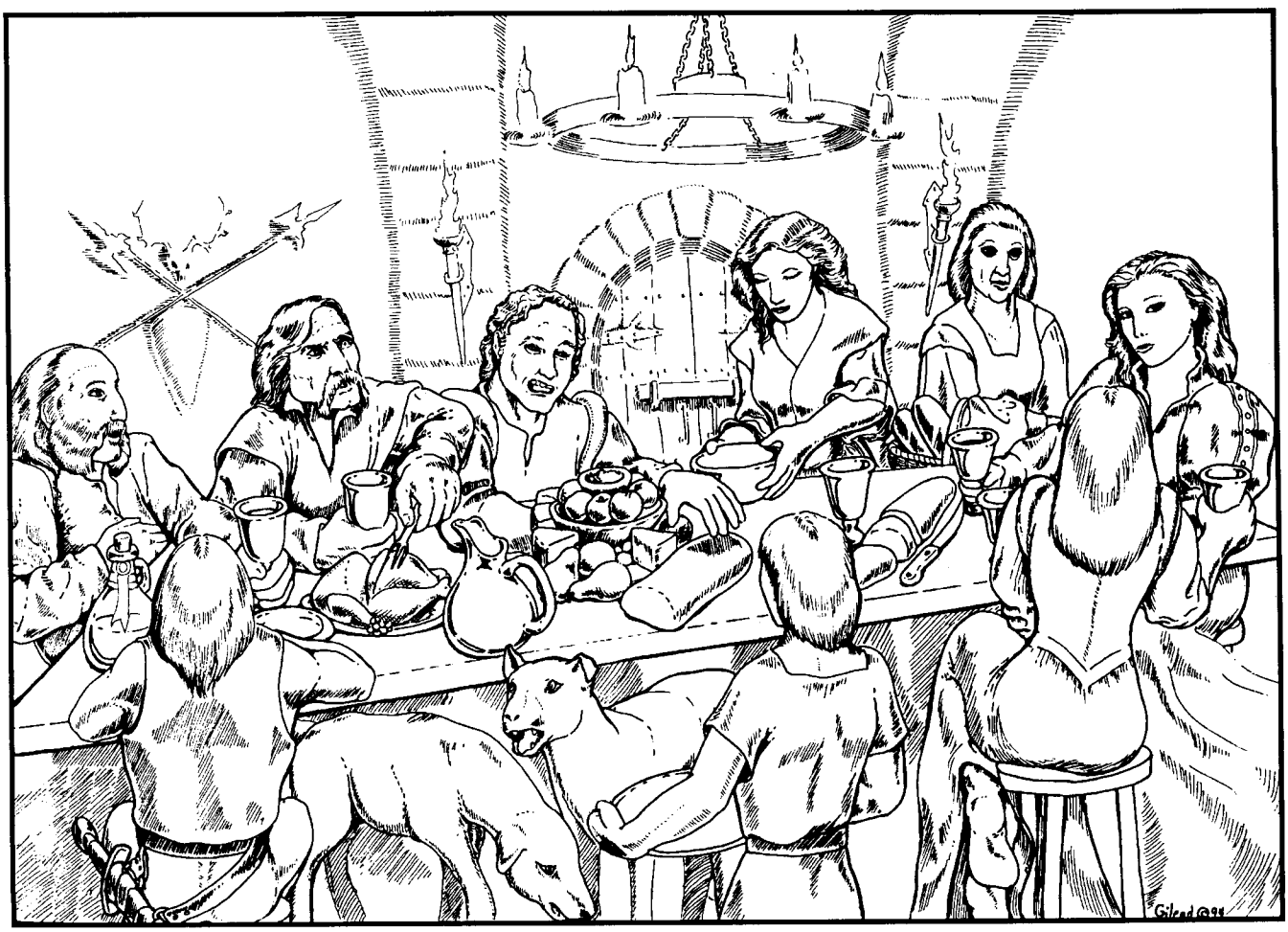
7.4.5 SCENES AND EVENTS

A scene is a series of dramatic presentations that are related to one another by setting and time. Scenes are the primary tool you will use (as a GM) to deliver information about the game to the players. You should learn how to construct and portray scenes in the most effective manner possible.

Events are things that happen within scenes to move the story along. Many times, events are things that are directly controlled by the characters, but by the forces inside the story. The difference is perspective (what is an event for the PCs might not be an event for the NPCs). For example, a storm keeping all ships in the harbor would be an event. However, a PC summoning up a storm to make his ship move faster would not be an event (at least for the PCs).

The Scene as a Story Element

The best way to learn about scenes is to watch or television shows. In movies (and shows), a scene is identifiable because it occurs all within the same location at the same time. If there is a change in either location or time, the scene has changed.



Pay attention to what (and how much) the director has put into each scene. You will notice that different types of scenes contain different amounts of stuff going on in them. You will also notice that different directors use different methods of conveying information in a scene. The primary thing to remember is that each scene should have a reason (even if that reason is simple comedy) and/or should convey some information to the players (even if that information is false or misleading; this is particularly true if you are using Masking techniques).



In general, a scene should revolve around one or two events (more than two runs the risk of overload for the PCs). When you are preparing for each session, you should envision the upcoming session as a series of potential scenes to be played through. Even if you do not know exactly what the outcome of each scene is, you should have in mind a series of possible scenes. Think of the events that will be the center of each scene. Try to imagine how the PCs will act (or react) to each scene.

When designing scenes, you should try and construct enough scenes so that each character has approximately an equal opportunity to participate in the session. This can become difficult without seeming to channel the characters; but, with practice, will result in everyone feeling satisfied. One way to avoid the contrived feeling in the session is to designs the scenes so that they can occur in just about any setting. This way, you can ensure that where ever the characters are, they can "encounter" the scene.

Imagery

Use the familiar to describe scenes. If you say "...his arm bumps the glass sending it to the floor where it shatters," everyone has an instant image in their head of what just happened. You do not need to describe the shape of the glass, or the contents of the glass. Each player does that on his own.

Everyone is full of familiar experiences that they draw upon to fill in the gaps of description. By calling upon these familiar experiences, you can get a lot of impact with very short descriptions.

Once you learn to use the familiar, you can then invert the familiar to make a description full of awe and mystery. For example, if you say "...the pool of water on the floor is dripping upwards to the ceiling!" everyone immediately has an image in their head. Even though they may have never seen what you described, they know what it looks like, and they are enthralled by the mysterious nature of such a phenomena (so long as you do not overuse this technique). Once again, you get a lot of dramatic bang, for a very small descriptive buck.

Story Injectors

While most events are pretty self-explanatory, there is one type of event that bears particularly importance. Any type of event that results in new energy for the players is called a story injector. Story injectors almost always involve the revealing of new information for the players to act upon. Sometimes, however, the best story injector is simply a confirmation that the players are moving down the right path.

A common story injector is an NPC who can relate a testimony about an event or some other NPC. For example, after the party rescues the victim from the dungeons of the overlord, a powerful scene might be one where the victim relates the atrocities committed by the overlord. This should instill some kind of drive and/or motivations within the players to complete their goals.

Story injectors are very important tools to use when the PCs seem to be straying from their main goals. A good story injector at the right moment is often all a group needs to redirect them and their energies. However, before you start using story injectors all over the place, you must make sure that you know what the group's goals are! Do not presume that the group is attempting to accomplish what you want them to. If you start throwing story injectors in front of a group who is heading in a particular direction (on purpose), they will feel as if you are trying to steer them away from their true course.

Story injectors might seem like contrivances, but are seldom viewed as such by the players. More often, a good story injector can create so much emotion in the players that they pursue the story with twice as much energy as before! Use them sparingly. A story that is moving at a good pace does not need a injector to keep it going. If you save the injector for that moment when the party is starting to slow down, it will be that much more powerful.

7.4.6 THE OTHER SENSES

A GM should never forget that communication is never simply a verbal description. There are many, many other tools he can use to convey both mood and emotion.

Music

Well composed music can add a level of intensity to the mood of your game that cannot even begin to be measured. However, remember that the key here is "well composed" music.

The best composed music that we have discovered, comes from movie soundtracks and instrumentals. Remember that there is an obvious analogy between a movie and a gaming session. Music is used in movies to enhance a mood or a feeling. The same music can invoke the same type of enhancement in a gaming session.

The biggest trick to using music to enhance your session is to not worry about it. Simply turn it on and let it run (at least until the end of the scene; where music changes are most likely to be needed). There will be times when the music is inappropriate; but there will also be times when the music very appropriate. Players will learn to ignore the music when it isn't appropriate, but they will feel the intensity when it is appropriate.

In general, you can let a given piece of music run for the duration for a few scenes. However, as critical scene changes occur, you should select more appropriate types of music.

The list below are some of the movie soundtracks and instrumentals that are good for gaming sessions.

Hunt for Red October	Last of the Mohicans
The Fugitive	1492:The Conquest of Paradise
The Mission	Backdraft
Batman	Dracula
Enya	Celtic Odyssey
Clannad	Terminator 1 and 2
Aliens	Empire of the Sun
Indiana Jones	Star Wars
Star Trek:The Wrath of Khan	The Chieftains
Rob Roy	

Visual Aids

Another great aid in communicating an idea is the visual aid. This usually includes any kind of prop, but might also include maps and drawings. Some great ideas for props include articles of clothing that are associated with a specific NPC (e.g., if the boatman always wears a floppy hat, you can put on the hat when you speak as the boatman), a baton (broom handle, etc.) that can represent the king's scepter or the dwarf's mace, handwritten notes from various NPCs and long dead prophets, or miniature figures.

However, visual aids are not limited to tangibles (like props and paper). By getting down on your knees when you are speaking as the dwarf, you have provided a visual aid to the players. By lying on the ground in the middle of the players, you are providing them with a reminder that there is a dead body in their midst, etc.

You will discover as you implement different types of visual aids that the players will pick up on this idea. They will begin to bring their own visual aids (perhaps they have a favorite mug for their character that they will drink out of during the session, etc.). Be creative and encourage your players to join in the fun!

Emotions and Motivations

Entertainment is linked to emotions. We like to cry at movies, laugh at comedy shows, and get goose bumps when we reach some revelation in a book we are reading. A good GM will inspire emotion in his players. And emotion will drive the players choices for his character.

Good players will help you generate the emotions in your game. When the evil villain burns down a PC's house, the player will (hopefully) feel anger and hate towards that villain. That hate and anger will drive him to actions within the game. These actions open doors for you to create more emotion. Thus, the story gives itself energy.

So how do you create emotion in your game? You must know what motivates emotion in each player. You must understand your players' personality well enough to know what they hate, what they love, and what makes them laugh. Once you know this, you can have your enemies perform atrocities that the players truly find unspeakable, or the NPCs can spark the flames of romance.

Of course, if you do not know your players well enough, you will have to fall back on the stereotypes. There are several types of things people generally find disgusting (e.g., hordes of crawly and slimy insects), hate (evil villains who kill innocents), or love (sweet romantic gestures). Explore books and movies to find out what other directors/ authors have deemed necessary triggers for hate, love, etc. Talk to other GMs to find things they have done.

> **Example:** *One NPC villain was instantly hated by the PCs (even though they had never met him), because of his reported actions. He was a sheriff over a small village. The village was short on their taxes and the villain had a young boy slain and skinned. The skin was stretched over the village well, denying the villagers water from the well for 5 days. Though the party had never met the NPC, they hated him and knew him to be evil.*

There is one word of caution. You should always monitor the emotional content of your stories. Be sensitive to the desires of your players. Some people get really embarrassed at emotional content (and such scenes should be glossed over for them). Some people have weak stomachs for graphic violence (and disgusting descriptions may need to be curbed). Some people are playing the game to escape the stress of their every day life (such people might respond unexectedly to undue stress for their characters). You must constantly watch the responses from your players and tailor your presentation to match their needs and desires.

7.5 RULES VS. ROLE PLAYING

In many recent role playing games, there has been a trend towards sparser rules and fewer game mechanics, in the belief that fewer rules increases the emphasis on role playing. Advocates of this trend profess that too many rules interfere with role playing.

7.5.1 IS THERE AN INCOMPATIBILITY?

The fact is, there is not. It is not the mechanics of a game that get in the way of active role playing—it is the *inappropriate* application of game mechanics that draw attention away from role playing.

The Merits of No Rules

There is something to be said for games run with few or no rules. Game mechanics *do* intrude upon role playing if they take more than the briefest time to resolve. When no rules are present, players who would otherwise describe their actions in terms of tactical sequences and mechanics can no longer do so. Magical or quality items are no longer described as having "bonuses" or "penalties," and there are few delays for consulting charts or success checks. In addition, players are not limited to the system mechanics when generating their characters. If they wish to play a very experienced character, they simply create it.

On the other hand, it is difficult for the GM to arbitrate skill contests between PCs. Combats, maneuvers and other skill resolutions become completely dependent on the GMs ability to fairly resolve them. If the players do not agree with the results, the only recourse open to the GM is to insist that the results will stand. The players must trust the GM implicitly, or the game will usually fail due to the dissent generated. What is more, it is very easy to abuse the system, especially during character creation.

The Merits of Rules

With a good explicit system of rules and mechanics for resolving disputes and contests of skill, the GM is properly equipped to provide fair, consistent results. Realism is enhanced, and because rules are provided for all skills, it becomes easier to simulate activities and abilities with which the player may have no actual familiarity.

In addition, if the skill lists are extensive enough, characters may actually be created *more* realistically and flexible than without. Secondary skills and esoteric abilities may provide character ideas and concepts that might have languished under a system with no support in this regard.

On the down side, rules-heavy systems may slow down role playing at times by requiring the GM and players to consult the texts at times. The answer is to use the rules to establish a *framework*, then utilize that *framework* in place of rules consultations whenever possible.

7.5.2 BUILDING A FRAMEWORK

The notion of a *framework* is integral to this discussion. A framework is the internal representation a GM uses to make judgements within the game session. It is a combination of familiarity with the rules, common sense, and experience with the material and players. A good example is the PCs attempting an unusual maneuver, such as climbing a cliff face through a waterfall. The GM obviously cannot consult a chart for every situation and must arbitrate the difficulty of the maneuver "on the fly." Such an occurrence is common, and every GM has faced this sort of thing. How does the GM make such decisions? The GM uses the internal framework that has built up making just these sorts of decisions. As a GM gains experience, both he and his players trust that framework more and more. Eventually, a GM with a strong internal framework rarely consults modifier charts or mechanics tables at all, because it would be redundant. The "feel" for the system is so thorough and accurate that there is simply no need to do so.

Building such a framework comes easily to some... less so to others. Primarily, it is related to experience and familiarity with the game system, but a very strong element of common sense and fairness is required as well. The best way to build such a framework is to work with a set of rules long enough for them to become "second nature." In addition, those rules need to be learned through consistent and accurate application, or the framework developed will not actually reflect the system being used. If the GM decides that a rule (or rules) within the system is not reasonable or accurate, then a change should definitely be made, but that change must then be applied with the same vigor, consistency, and accuracy as any other rule.

7.5.3 THE ATMOSPHERE OF TRUST

An important adjunct to the establishment of a framework is the atmosphere of trust that must be present between players and GM. The GM must be confident in his own abilities, and apply rules with both impartiality and consistency. If the GM seems unsure of himself, the players will certainly pick up on this fact, and their confidence in his decisions will be low, generating argument and dissension during the session. If the GM is confident and applies judgements with certainty and with no room for argument, the players will feel that they can rely on his judgement, and will accept such judgement without question or hesitation.

If the GM is partial in his application of the rules, showing favoritism or inconsistency, the players will quickly notice this as well. If the players feel that they cannot count upon the GM to fairly apply the rules, then they will constantly ask for rules clarifications, chart lookups and they will begin arguments about the application of the rules. *This*, more than anything else, is what creates the conflict of rules and role playing. The GM should strive to build trust in his rulings.

7.5.4 WHEN TO DROP THE RULES

When the GM's framework is firmly established, and there is trust between the GM and players, it is not only allowable but *desirable* to let many of the game mechanics and rules drop away. This does not mean that the GM doesn't continue to consider those rules, but he no longer stops the role playing to apply the game mechanics. For example, if a strong role playing moment is in progress, and the players needs to make a simple roll to remember a bit of lore about the region, the GM may decide that the role playing is more important than stopping the game for modifiers and charts and dice rolls, and so decides to give the players the information (whether in full or in part) and thereby encourages the player to stay in character.

In general, it is a good idea for novice GMs to utilize the game mechanics fully until such time that they are completely familiar with the game system. When they have a strong enough feel for how the mechanics produce results, some of the actual application of mechanics can be quietly removed.



SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTS

While most of the advice and guidelines in this book apply to almost any type of game, there are some special gaming environments that must be addressed.

8.1 TOURNAMENTS

This section will attempt to provide guidelines for those Gamemaster who want to design and/or run tournaments. The most common site for tournaments is at a convention (and the discussions presume that you are working within the standard convention limitations).

There are many different factors to consider when designing a good tournament. The main areas of concern when designing a good tournament are: 1) how much time do you have to convey your story, 2) what kind of characters do you need for your event, and 3) how to not seem contrived. There are other smaller issues that should be considered at least to some degree as well.

8.1.1 THE TIME FACTOR

In a tournament, a Gamemaster has a limited amount of time with which to convey his story. Learning the proper balance of action, intrigue, and character development time is a tricky thing. This section will provide some guidelines on how to handle this delicate issue, as well as other issues specific to tournament design.

Be aware that most tournaments are scheduled in blocks of 3 to 4 hours. You must keep this in mind when designing your event (as you must plan on working in 3 to 4 hour "chunks" at a time).

Before you begin, you must determine how big of a story you want to tell. A small story can usually be conveyed in 3 to 4 hours (the usual amount of time given in a tournament setting). Larger stories can take much longer to convey. Determine how many "chunks" of time you need. If the story is larger than a small story (i.e., more than one chunk of time), you must consider how you want to structure the time needed. Now you have three choices.

1) You can run the event as a series of contiguous sessions. This does not necessarily mean running a continuous event; rather, that where you leave off in one session, you will pick up in another. This could be simply treated as a series of intense normal gaming sessions.
2) You can run the event as a series of single rounds with no connections between them. This is similar to #1, except that each session has a pre-defined beginning (and a group may not actually complete one session before beginning the second).
3) You can run the event as a multi-round event (i.e., preliminary rounds first, culminating in a final round). This is more difficult to coordinate, but generally more satisfying to the players (after all, they can participate in a normal gaming session at home).

Of the list above, the options are listed in order of increasing difficulty to design and/or run. Keep this in mind as you make the decision. Once you have decided how you want to run the game, you can begin actually designing the game.



When determining how much time you need for your tournament, you must understand the mechanics of the system you are using. For example, if you are using a system with a very fast moving combat system, you can expect to design in a number of combats in a single chunk of time. However, if combat is very detailed and involved, you will probably want to keep the number combats very low (maybe having only one or two combats).

8.1.2 DESIGNING ENCOUNTERS

In general, for every "chunk" of time you have to work with, you can expect to have 3 to 6 encounters designed into the tournament. There are basically five types of encounters you can design. Each of these is listed below (along with a short description of each type).

1) Combat Encounter: This is an encounter that is intended to result in a combat of some kind. However, it may be that the players are able to avoid the combat by playing cleverly. You should try to design the encounter in such a way that a clever group could avoid the combat. Only in extreme cases (i.e., an ambush or a sneak attack) should the combat be unavoidable.
2) Role Playing Encounter: This is the most time intensive type of encounter. However, it is also the most difficult type to design. This type of encounter always involves some kind of NPC (who must be appropriately designed for the encounter). The intent of this type of encounter is usually to provide insight to the story by allowing the players to see other perspectives of the story. In a good design, there will be more encounters of this type than any other single type.
3) Information Gathering Encounter: This type of encounter can be run very quickly or can be designed partially as a Role Playing Encounter. Basically, the intent of the encounter is to impart important information to the players. The number of these encounters should be kept to a minimum (maybe by making most of them Role Playing Encounters).
4) Action Encounters: These are similar to Combat Encounters, but instead of involving hostile forces attacking the party, the party must overcome some kind of obstacles using other skills. Like a Combat Encounter, this type of encounter also relies heavily upon the system mechanics.
5) Puzzle Encounters: These are similar to Role Playing Encounters except that the players are not interacting with an NPC; instead, they are interacting with information and each other to solve a puzzle. This could include overcoming some trap (possibly an extension of an Action Encounter) or avoiding being tricked by an NPC (possible an extension of a Role Playing Encounter).

It is not necessary to have an encounter of each type in the tournament (in fact you will probably want to double up on a couple). However, you must remember that people play in tournaments for a variety of reasons. If you have at least one encounter of each type above, you will please almost all types of players.

8.1.3 WRITING IT ALL DOWN

Most tournament designers are also the GM for the tournament. As such, it is not necessary to document every detail of the design. However, there is a very important factor to consider when deciding to document the design or not: creative resources.

If you document most of the design, you will discover that you have freed up enormous amounts of creative resources for use during the running of the event. In addition, you will also discover that you can call upon others to help you run the event (which cannot effectively happen until you can document at least a majority of the event). See Section 9.2 for more information on Running the Tournament.

8.1.4 CHARACTERS

One very important consideration when designing a tournament is how many players are going to play in a given session. In general, less than four players is too few and more than ten is too many. You should design assuming that there will be approximately 4-6 players (this is usually the optimum for most conventions).

There are two types of tournament characters: those designed by the players of the tournaments and those designed by the designer of the tournament. Most tournaments are written for a specific cast of characters (and thus, the designer must also design the characters). This is probably the best method to utilize all of the attractive features of tournaments, but we will discuss the advantages of having players bring their own characters to the game.

Pre-Generated Characters

The major advantage to having pre-generated characters is that you (as the designer) can key specific elements of the story to specific characters. This makes the story richer and more interesting.

However, there are two major drawbacks as well. If an individual player cannot identify with the character he ends up with, he will be frustrated and might pose some problems during the session. This will be discussed further in Section 8.2.

The other major drawback is that designing characters takes time. If you are using pre-generated characters in your tournament, you should spend as much time designing the characters as you spent designing the rest of the tournament. This includes making sure that the characters are presented in a completely usable fashion to the players.

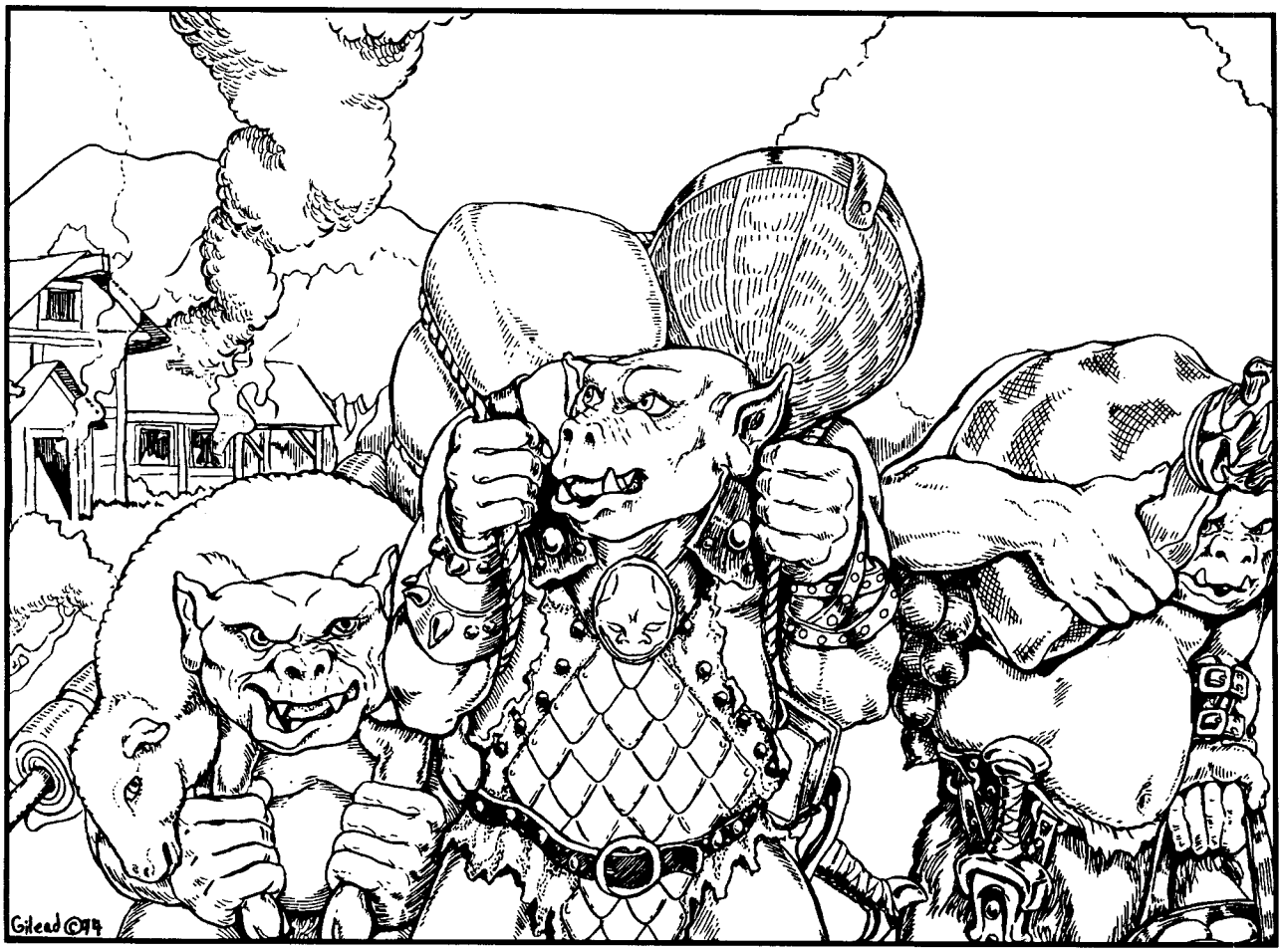
To offset the first drawback, each character must be incredibly rich in detail. Most tournament designers design their characters either before the rest of the tournament or while they are designing the rest of the tournament. This is very important, because there should be at least one opportunity for each character to shine in the tournament. Thus, you should design the encounters with the particular cast of characters in mind.

Bring Your Own Character

The major advantage of using this format is that the players will be very intimate with their characters and will have no difficulty role playing their personas. This provides for some very rich role playing and generally enjoyable sessions.

However, if you decide to use this type of character, you must leave your story design flexible to handle any combination of characters. For example, what happens if everyone brings a Healer character to the tournament? Will the story still work if there are no spell users or lock pickers?

In addition, you have to ensure that all players are designing their characters with the same set of rules. The Rolemaster Standard Rules provides a system of character generation that can be quickly verified by the GM as to the validity of the generation (i.e., use the fixed points for stat assignment, "fixed" options for all other aspects of character generation). If the system you are using does not easily accommodate this kind of verification, you will have difficulty with players min-maxing their characters (e.g., "Yes. I actually rolled six 100s for stats. Honest!").



8.1.5 THE HANDS ON EXPERIENCE

Remember that players who play in your tournament will walk away from the tournament with only their memories... unless you give them something else. By giving the players something they can walk away from the session with, they will have something to spark their memories and to remind them of the great time they had playing your tournament. So prepare handouts!

The most obvious handout is the character sheet. Take time to make the character sheets look nice and readable. Make sure that all of the game mechanics information is accessible and not confusing. Also make sure that the character background information is organized logically (usually this means chronologically based upon events in the character's past). Also, use headers (sort of like headlines) between major sections of a character's background. This allows players to quickly scan the character sheet and find that elusive bit of information a little faster.

However, remember that there are other things that can be made into handouts. For example, if the characters are all summoned together by a call from the Mayor pleading for their assistance, go ahead and craft the summons (making a copy for each character). If the characters stumble across a stack of tiles with strange runes upon them, go down to the local teacher supply store and find some blank cards (or tiles) and craft the tiles. The players will get wide-eyed when you describe the tiles and then dump them onto the table!

Anything that is tangible provides the player with one more connection to the story. As time permits, you should construct handouts for as many things as possible. You might even construct handouts for the insignificant things... just to provide that tangible element for the player.

8.1.6 KNOW YOUR SPACE

Another important factor to keep in mind is the location that the tournament will be held in. For example, if you know that you will be in a quiet location (e.g., a secluded hotel room), you can plan on using sound and special dramatics. However, if you know that you will be in the middle of a gymnasium with simple cloth partitions around your table, you can count on the environment being loud, limiting your use of subtle sound and dramatics.

Something else to keep in mind is the general size of the space available. For example, if you have the back corner of a small gaming store, you cannot plan on having your players jumping around and getting physical with the story. However, if you have a large room, you can plan on neat scenes where you are constantly moving around and having the players in small quiet little conferences.

If at all possible, try and find out about the location where the tournament is to be held. Some specific information to seek includes: the general location (e.g., in the middle of the convention floor or the back corner of a gaming store), size of the playing space (e.g., one table in the small back room or a private suite in a hotel), the size and shape of the table(s) available for the session (e.g., long and rectangular or small circular), and the times the tournament will be run (e.g., early morning or mid-afternoon).

8.1.7 SCORING

This is a tough issue. Because this is a tournament, most people are expecting a "winner." However, "winning" a role playing game is almost a contradiction in terms. Here are some guidelines that will help you deal with this complex issue.

No Prizes

If there are no prizes, there is no need for scoring! This is the simplest of situations, but also the least common in a convention environment. There is usually some sort of prize involved (or this would have been billed as a role playing session, not a role playing tournament).

Single Round Events

If your event has a single round and a single session, the best way to determine a winner is to have the players vote (in a secret ballot) on who they think should win. The GM should also vote (and his vote should probably count as two player votes). In general, it is not a good idea to have players vote for themselves. Then simply tally the votes and award the prize.

However, if your tournament is a single round event with multiple sessions, you have different problems. Do you award a single prize, or multiple prizes. It is easiest to award a single prize for each session. This avoids a lot of complications. If you cannot do this, see the notes below for "The Final Round."

Multi-Round Events

When running a multi-round event, you must determine how many teams you can run at one time (i.e., how many GMs do you have working with you). If you only have one (i.e., yourself), you should schedule the teams to play under you one at a time. Elimination should occur until there is only one team left playing

There are two different philosophies on scoring multi-round events. Some people prefer a system that promotes good teamwork and cooperation. Other folks would rather be rewarded for good role-playing. Unfortunately, any method of scoring these two is usually contradictory with the other. If you are scoring for role playing, this usually means you are advancing individuals—this provides no incentive for teamwork and cooperation (as a matter of fact, it becomes very competitive to get the best role playing time in). However, if you are scoring for teamwork and cooperation, it sometimes means that certain characters (or types of characters) are relegated to more passive or support roles. This results in those players not getting much time in for role playing. In addition, if you are scoring a whole team and a really good player gets stuck on a bad team, he is not rewarded at all. On the converse, if you are scoring based upon role playing, a group who came as a team will be broken up when individuals are advanced. So we have a quandary.

In general, you must choose one type of advancement or the other. When choosing teamwork and cooperation, you will generally advance a full team at a time. When choosing to score role playing, you will generally advance individuals on a team. The type of advancement you choose may depend mostly on the number of players you expect to have in your tournament. If you only expect to run 10 to 15 players in the whole tournament, you will probably want to use individual advancement. However, if you expect to run more than 15, you can probably use a team advancement (though you may decide that individual advancement is more to your taste).

A Good Compromise

If you are running more than 24 or so players, you have another alternative for advancement—both individual and team advancement. In our experiences running tournaments, this type of advancement is very well received by all those that play it... and nobody feels like they got the raw end of the deal. Below is a sample of how it works.

Presume that you have designed a 3-round tournament and are prepared to run 48 players in twelve teams of 4 players each. This will result is 12 teams in the first round, 6 teams in the second round, and 3 teams in the final round. You can advance four of the teams based upon a team advancement scheme (i.e., 4 teams advance based upon what they accomplished during the session). That leaves 8 teams (or 32 players). Take the 8 best role players from that bunch and make two "wild card" teams. This gives you 6 teams in the second round. From these six teams, advance two based upon their accomplishments and form another wildcard team from the non-advancing players. Thus, in the final you will have three teams—two who advanced on their accomplishments and one team of the best role players from the non-advancing teams.

The Final Round

In multi-round tournaments, players have invested a fair amount of time learning the story and getting involved with their characters. This should (in theory) be a great reward. However, most folks want more. If there is only one team playing in the final, simply making it to the finals is a great reward; a winner can be determined as in a Single Round Event (see above).

The easiest solution for the final round is to award a single prize for each team that plays in the final (see Single Round Events above for guidelines on how to do this). However, most people who expend the effort and energy to play in a multi-round event would like to have some "declared" winner. This can be accomplished in two different ways.

Any point system that you can devise, can be manipulated by a group of players who are simply looking for the win. The best system of judging the final winning team is to have all the GMs who ran a team get together and discuss the differences between the teams (this discussion is ideally coordinated and directed by the designer of the tournament). After a session of observing the strengths and weaknesses of each team, it may become clear as to which team was the best. However, if it is not clear at this point which team is best, the group of GMs should ask how each team would have done under one of the other GMs. For example, it may be that one team did very well, because of the strengths of a particular GM; but under a different GM they would have floundered. The best team will have performed equally well under any GM.

Ideally, there should be a prize for the whole team. If there are not enough prizes to award one to each player on the winning team, see Single Round Events for guidelines on determining a single winner on a team.

8.1.8 RUNNING THE GAME

There is one major piece of advice to those about to run a tournament: Be Prepared! This means different things to different people, but the advice is 100% true. There should be no aspect of the tournament that you are unclear about. There should be no NPC in the tournament who you don't know like you own character. In addition, you must know and understand all player character backgrounds (because the players are going to ask you about it when they are confused).

Remember that the goal of the tournament is to make sure that everyone has fun while role playing (the prizes should be very secondary). Here are some specific other bits of advice on specific aspects of running tournaments.

Stay in Charge

When running a tournament, you must remain in control. If you are intimidated by some kinds of players, you need to be ready to confront this fear head-on. Never let a player demand something from you that you are not completely willing to let him have. If you have a rules lawyer in your session (and you will have them at some time), ask him for the specific rule before he quotes it to you. This will still leave you in charge and allow him to contribute in the best fashion he can.

Who do you Trust?

The players in the session must trust you. As long as you have the trust of the players, they will let you run the game in any fashion you deem appropriate. They will assume that you know what's going on. Therefore, you must always appear that you know exactly what you are doing. If you ever start to falter, the players will sense that you are getting lost and begin to lose trust in you. What this means is that you must be incredibly adept at winging it through unexpected situations, or simply be prepared for everything that you can (reducing the likelihood of being caught off guard).

Tailor the Event to the Players

You must recognize the different types of players you have in your game; and you must figure this out relatively quickly. This may mean modifying certain events in the game to draw upon the strengths of the particular players in your session (however, remember that you cannot change anything that is in the character backgrounds). If you discover that one player is adept at keeping track of events in the game, give him an opportunity to do that with his character (e.g., he is given those duties by an NPC in charge).

Also, do not force people to play roles that they are going to be uncomfortable with. If you discover that someone has a character that they are not comfortable playing, allow them to fudge it. For example, if someone who does not have strong leadership qualities ends up with the character who is the party leader, he will be uncomfortable in making demands of the others in the group. If you require that player to make command decisions, he is going to get very frustrated (and thus make the other players frustrated). Instead, have an NPC suggest that some other player be the second in command and allow that player to take a leading role. Of course, this means that you must identify the more appropriate leader and make such adjustments as quickly as possible (before the frustration gets out of hand).

The Name of the Game

Remember that this is a Role Playing game. Never ignore that! This means that you must give the players ample time to play their personas. It also means that you must do your part and play the NPCs just like you would play your own characters.

Practice Make Perfect

You should attempt to playtest your tournament before you run it for real. This is just as much for experiencing the flow of the game as it is for play balance. You will discover that your original design is usually pretty close and you will hopefully not have to change many encounters.

Each time you run the tournament, you will get better at it. This occurs because you are "winging" it less and less each time. Each time you run the event, you will learn some neat trick that will make running the event easier. Each little trick that you call upon will free up some creative resources that can be used in some other area of the game.

This is always true once the tournament begins. For example, if you are running a multi-round event, you will have more difficulty running the first session than you will the last. If you are scoring, be sure to keep this in mind (as the GM is actually not running the same event exactly the same way each time).

8.2 ON-LINE GAMING

A new medium for role-playing has been gaining popularity in recent years... on-line gaming.

8.2.1 THE ADVANTAGES

There are several advantages to the on-line format for gaming. First, there is always someone available to play your favorite game. Instead of trying to organize a group of players from your local circle of friends, you can gather people from all over the country (or world!) to play a game. There will almost always be someone ready and willing to play your favorite game, no matter how obscure.

Second, the format encourages good role play. Because distractions are at a minimum, and everyone has plenty of time to consider their answers, role play often improves over the average face-to-face (FTF) game.

Third, the time investment is easier to make, because it is only necessary to get on-line once every day or two for a few moments to read the latest messages and compose a reply. A quick ten-minute hop on-line is easier to schedule than a six-hour game session once a week.

Fourth, game control techniques such as masking and subjective perspective are even easier to implement with private messages—the whispering and removal to adjacent rooms necessary at times in FTF gaming are unneeded here.

8.2.2 THE DISADVANTAGES

The first and most telling disadvantage to on-line gaming is the cost. Even with an Automated Interface Program (AIP), the services cost money, and the more time you spend on-line the more money you spend.

Second, any game played on-line takes much more time to finish than the same game would FTF. Where a FTF group might complete a simple adventure in a few game sessions, an on-line group might take months of even years to finish.

Third, not all of the players and GMs one encounters on-line will be reliable. Sometimes one will begin game only to have it die from lack of interest a month later, or even because the GM has decided to cancel his on-line account. This can be frustrating, but asking around can help you weed out the flagrantly unreliable.

Fourth, of course, one must have access to a computer.

8.2.3 ADJUSTING TO THE FORMAT

Game Mechanics

Because the GM and players are not present in the same room, the rolling of dice and the application of game mechanics becomes problematic. Some on-line GMs handle this by doing all die rolls and skill checks and informing the players, letting the players role play the results. Some try to get all of the players for arranged meetings to resolve combats and the like. In general, it is much easier to drop as many game mechanics as feasible, and focus on the role play and description. If the character creation process is detailed enough, the players should be able to get a feel for the limits and capabilities of their characters.

Time Frame

There is just no way to get around the time frame problem of on-line gaming. When you post a message to the message area, it may take one or two days for the player to have time to get on-line and download the message, then reply to it, and reply. Then it may be one or two days before you get on-line for the reply and compose a reply and post it. The player then finally gets it back and so on. And this cycle may be simply to ask for a description of the room! The simplest actions take a *long* time to resolve. To combat this problem, the GM should try to get on-line as often as possible to check and reply to game messages. In addition, when signing players up for a game, get an indication from them of the frequency with which they will be posting. Don't group players who have vastly disparate frequencies, as one or the other will end up being frustrated.

Fortunately, GMs and players begin to get better at anticipating within certain boundaries. When the PCs enter a room, the GM will go ahead and describe as much as he can about the setting, so that the group will not have to wait for someone to ask about what they are seeing and get a reply from the GM. Some GMs allow contingency planning ("My character jumps out the window—if that doesn't work she runs out the front door.").

The most important thing is to avoid anticipating *others'* actions. If one player not only indicates intentions for his own character, but also indicates his response to what he *believes* another character will do, he is scripting that player's actions.

8.2.4 A FINAL NOTE

Apart from on-line gaming, spending time in the RPG areas of the various on-line services reaps benefits in your own FTF games as well. A GM can post questions for general discussion, with scores of people there to offer advice, criticisms, and aid. Graphics, assistant programs, product updates and more can be found in the software libraries, and there are a large number of game designers on-line who will field questions about your favorite game. All in all, the on-line areas are a resource too valuable to be ignored, and their importance will only continue to grow in the coming years.



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MOLDING THE SYSTEM

9.1 GAME EFFECTS OF STATISTICS AND PROBABILITIES

This section will discuss some of the areas of ***Rolemaster*** where statistics and probability are prominent. Most importantly will be a discussion on what happens to the statistics and probabilities when a GM adjusts one of the given game mechanics.

GMs should feel free to change anything in the game system that they feel should be changed. The purpose of this section is to provide an analysis of what happens when you change a given game mechanic. Thus, GMs can make more informed decisions about whether or not to change the system mechanic.

Here are the topics that will be covered in this section:

Dice Rolls: This is a discussion of the different types of dice rolls used in Rolemaster.

Character Points: The new character creation system uses a fixed number of points with a small random element added to them. What happens to when you adjust the starting number of character points?

Initiative Rolls: The Tactical Action Sequence uses two dice as the random element in initiative. What are the effects of using a different combination of die rolls?

Weapon Breakage: The new weapon breakage rules are centered around two numbers: Breakage Numbers and Weapon Strength. What happens when you raise or lower either one of these two numbers?

Skill Bonuses: General static maneuvers presume a 101+ success rate. Here is a study on the probabilities of success in using a skill.

9.1.1 DICE ROLLS

There are two types of dice rolls used in ***Rolemaster***. The first is a simple linear dice roll (e.g., d100). The other is an additive dice roll (e.g., 10d10). Exactly what are the differences between the two types? This article will discuss the probabilities associated with each type.

Linear Dice Rolls

The simplest dice roll is a simple linear roll. Every d100 roll is a simple linear roll. Each result has a 1% chance of occurring. In general, this type of roll uses a target range that indicates success. For example, if a given action has a 50% chance of success, the success range could be named as 51-100. To increase the chance of success, make the range larger. To decrease the change of success, make the range smaller.

The only thing that might not be quite obvious is the fact that a 100 is just as likely to occur as a 50. Thus, the GM must make sure that he doesn't pick an exact number when using a d100 roll. Instead, he must pick a range of numbers to indicate success.

Open-Ended Dice Rolls

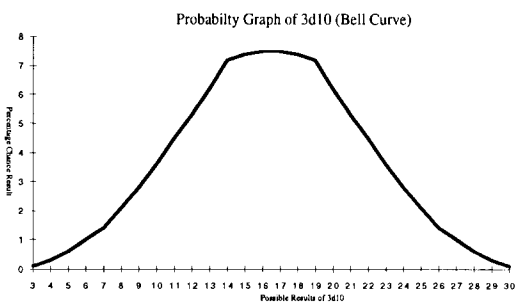
A variant of the simple d100 is the open-ended d100. What exactly is the chance of rolling 150+ on an open-ended roll (presuming no modifications to the roll)? The chance is 2.5%. This is calculated as follows: there is a 5% chance that the roll is open-ended (the range from 96 to 100 is 5); this initiates another roll; the second roll must be 51 or greater–that's 50%; 50% of 5% is 2.5%.

As it can be seen, any result less than 180 has greater than a 1% chance of occurring. At 180, the chance drops to 1%. At 190, the chance is 0.5%. At 200, the chance is 0.25%. At 250, the chance is 0.125%. Those high target numbers are not quite as far out of reach as some GMs may think. With these probabilities in mind, the GM can keep target ranges in a proper frame of reference.

Additive Dice Rolls

The other major type of dice rolls in ***Rolemaster*** is the additive dice roll. Any time you add two or more dice together, the chance of any give result occurring is no longer linear. For example, rolling 10d10 is vastly different than rolling d100. The probability of rolling a 100 when rolling d100 is exactly 1% (1 in 100). The probability of rolling a 100 when rolling 10d10 is 0.00000001% (1 in 1 trillion)!

Anytime dice are added together, it creates a bell curve of values. The values most commonly generated are near the middle of the curve. The less commonly generated values are near the ends of the curve.



The more dice that are added together, the taller the curve. This indicates that the extremes get harder and harder to reach with more and more dice; conversely, the common numbers become more common. For example, rolling a 20 on 2d10 (the maximum result) has a 1 in 100 chance of occurring. However, rolling a 30 on 3d10 has a 1 in 1,000 chance of occurring. Looking at the median numbers, rolling a 11 on 2d10 has a 10% chance of occurring. Rolling a 16 on 3d10 has a 14% chance of occurring.

There are two specific instances when additive dice are used in ***Rolemaster***. The first is in character generation and the second is in initiative. In both cases, there is no "success" margin; rather, a number is generated to drift around a median result. Exceptional rolls result in exceptional results; but most results will drift slightly around a fixed point.

For more information, see the discussion on Character Generation and the discussion on Initiative.

9.1.2 CHARACTER POINTS

The character generation system uses a randomly generated number of points that are assigned to a character's temporary stats. This section discusses the statistics associated with changing the number of fixed points as well as the probabilities associated with the random element.

The Core Concept

The core concept behind the new character generation system is that most characters will start off with a very similar number of points distributed among their ten stats. In previous editions of the ***Rolemaster*** system, the amount of variance between starting characters could have been as great as 500 or more points! Under the new system, the maximum variance is 100, with an average variance of around 25.

The Fixed Points

With no modifications, the core system allows 600 points plus 10d10 to a character's temporary stats. The average number points that a character will start with is 655 (alternatively, the GM can use the fixed point system, giving 660 points to all characters—the discussion below presumes that you are using the fixed point system of 660 points).

An adventurer must assign at least 180 of these points to his two prime stats (except for the Layman who has no prime stats). This leaves 480 points to split between 8 stats and to use to raise prime stats. The average point assignment for the non-prime stats will then be 60. Looking at the averages for potential generation, it becomes clear that the average potential for prime stats is 96. For non-prime stats, the average potential is 82.

What happens when you raise the fixed points? What if you raise the number of fixed points from 660 to 750. The character must still assign 180 points to prime stats. This leaves 570 points to split among 8 stats—resulting in an average stat of 72! With the new potential generation system, this results in an average potential (of the non-prime stats) of 89.

One last note on the fixed point aspect of the system. The GM should realize that the potential generation system is very generous. Most characters will have high enough stats when they reach their potential (and the stat gain system at each level is more generous than previous editions of ***Rolemaster***). Do not just give in and give them high stats when they start!

The Random Element

In previous versions of the ***Rolemaster*** system, ten d100 were rolled and assigned to ten different stats. This resulted in what was sometimes a large variance in starting characters. The random element in character generation has now been greatly reduced. But what are the probabilities of any variance at all?

Most of the time, the results generated from 10d10 will fall within the range of 43-67. Occasionally, results will be as low as 35 or as high as 75. Remember that only one out of every trillion people born will have the perfect starting stats.

If you change the random element to a simple d100 roll, you have massively changed the random element assignment. Now, 100 occurs just as often as 50. That is, one out of every 100 people born will have the best possible stats!

9.1.3 INITIATIVE

The new Tactical Action Sequence has the players rolling two d10s to determine a sequence within a round. This section discusses the effects of varying the number of dice used in initiative.

Random Element versus Fixed Element

The first decision a GM must make when choosing how many dice to roll for initiative is how much random element will there be in combat. Different GMs view this differently. Some GMs would prefer combat to be decided with as little random element as possible (e.g., the fast characters will almost always strike first). Others like to see the hand of fate involved in everything (the slow characters have a decent chance of getting their action off before the fast character).

When considering this decision, the GM must understand the range of the fixed element. The random element is almost always added to a fixed element. This fixed element is based upon the character's Quickness stat bonus (-10 to +10, with an average of +0). Note that some races will have better fixed elements simply because they are quicker (this is seen when a race has a racial modifier to their Quickness stat bonus).

If you add 2d10 to this, the range becomes -8 to +30 (an average of 11). However, 58% of the dice rolls will be between 8 and 14 (44% are between 9 and 13). The chance of you moving as fast as you possible can (i.e., you rolled the best possible result), is 1%. There is only a 21% chance of rolling better than the average result (i.e., better than a 14). Thus, the random element is slightly less than the fixed element, but there are fringe cases where the random element exceeds the fixed element by a significant amount.

If you switch to only a single d10 roll for initiative, what is the effect? In this case, most of the time, the random element is approximately equal to the fixed element. The range for possible initiative scores is now -7 to +11 (with an average of 5 or 6). The chance of moving absolutely as fast as you can (i.e., roll the best possible number on the dice) is 10%. As a matter of fact, there is a 50% chance in any given round, that you are better than the average speed (i.e., better than a 5).

But what happens if you switch to rolling 3d10? In this case, it would seem that the random range is higher than the fixed range. But is it? The range now becomes -7 to +40 (with an average of 16 or 17). However, the chance of moving absolutely as fast as you can is 0.1% (one in one thousand). There is a 56% chances than a roll will fall within the range of 13 to 20. As you can see, instead of adding more random range, most of the time, the range is actually narrower than that of rolling 1 or 2 d10s (though the number of extraordinary cases are higher)..

9.1.4 WEAPON BREAKAGE

The rules for weapon breakage have two main factors: the weapon's Breakage Number and the weapon's Strength. This section discusses the probabilities of weapon breakage and the effects of modifying either number.

Probability of Weapon Breakage

There are two factors affecting weapon breakage. The first, Breakage Number, indicates how often a weapon checks for breakage. The second, Strength, indicates the chance of the weapon actually breaking.

Anytime an unmodified attack roll is doubles, compare the doubled number to the Breakage Number. If the doubled number is less than or equal to the Breakage Number, the weapon must check for breakage (after resolving the attack). The way these numbers were assigned was based upon the style of attack usually used with the weapon (e.g., weapons that strike with crushing attacks generally have higher Breakage Numbers).

Example: *A battle axe has a high breakage number; this indicates that the weapon is usually used in a smashing fashion. A rapier has a low breakage number; this indicates that the weapon is not normally used in such a way that would cause breakage.*

When checking for breakage (i.e., the attack roll was doubles, equal to or less than the Breakage Number), roll a d100 (open-ended) and add the weapon Strength. If the result is greater than 100, the weapon did not break. Otherwise, the weapon breaks.

The Breakage Numbers and weapon Strengths presented in *Arms Law* are set up to have weapons breaking less than 5% of the time (usually less than 2%). This means that at least 1 out of every 100 swings with the weapon, the weapon would break.

To calculate the percentage chance of breaking, subtract the weapon Strength from 100. Figure this as a percent. However, this is further multiplied by the Breakage Number expressed as a percent. For example, a broadsword has a breakage number of 7. Thus, multiply 7% by 20% to see that a broadsword has a 1.4% chance of breakage.

Breakage Numbers

Breakage numbers are dramatic. They make every roll interesting. When doubles come up, everyone gasps! What happens when a GM decides to raise or lower a breakage number? Using the broadsword as an example we will examine this phenomenon.

The broadsword has a Breakage Number of 7 and a weapon Strength of 80. This results in a 1.4% chance of breaking. If a GM lowers the Breakage number to 5, this lowers the chance of breakage to 1%. While this may not seem significant, the chance of breakage has just dropped by one-third.

If the Breakage Number is raised to 8, this raises the chance of breakage to 1.8%. Again, this may not seem significant, but the chances are raising from 1 in every 100 attacks to 2 in every 100 attacks.

Weapon Strengths

Much more significant is the weapon's Strength. A broadsword has a Strength of 80. If this strength is raised or lowered, the chance of breakage is significant altered.

If the Strength is lowered to 70, the chance for breakage almost doubles (from 1.4% to 2.1%). As you can see, modifying the weapon strength is much more precarious.

It should be pointed out that the percentages for breakage are just approximate. This is because the roll for breakage is open-ended. Thus, there is always the 5% chance that the roll will go super-low. With this in mind, even a 100 Strength is not immune to breakage!

9.1.5 SKILL BONUSES

One of the core concepts in the skill system of ***Rolemaster*** is the idea that most static maneuvers are successful with a total result over 100. With this in mind, exactly what are the chances of success for an average first level character?

Success

Most "normal" actions do not require a static maneuver. Thus, there are many things that first level characters can do without concern for "success" based upon the roll of the dice. When dealing with "unusual" skills or skills used in stressful situations, this is when "success" becomes critical. What are the actual chances of success?

Ideally, first level characters should succeed in their normal skills just over 50% of the time. The higher level characters should succeed more often; but, more importantly, will be able to attempt more and more complicated things.

Skill Roll Modifiers

To understand the chances of success, a GM must understand all of the modifiers to the static maneuver roll.

If the character is somewhat adept in a skill, he will have a +5 to +15 stat modifier for the skill (with some bonuses going as high as +30). In addition, if the character is attempting a skill that is appropriate for his profession, he will gain another bonus of +5 to +25. Finally, a character will probably not attempt to perform many skills unless he is adequately trained in the skill. This is represented by a rank bonus of anywhere from +5 to +30 (depending on racial adolescence, hobbies, and actual training).

As can be seen, there will be some skills in which a first level character will have positive modifiers as high as +85. Most skills will average around +30 to +40.

Presuming that the character works to make sure there are no negative modifiers, a character will succeed 30% to 40% of the time. If the character takes precautions to gain bonuses (i.e., takes extra time, has better equipment, etc.), this can easily raise the average bonus up to the 50% range. However, remember that there will be some skills that a character will have high bonuses on (in the +60 to +80 range), so do not be too liberal with the extra bonuses!

As the character rises in level, the odds of successfully making a static maneuver rise. However, most importantly, the character no longer has to work to gain the extra bonuses, and can even start to perform activities with penalties associated with them. For example, a first level character will most likely not attempt any serious static maneuvers while he is wounded (i.e., lost more than 25% of his hits), as this gives him a -10 to almost all actions. However, a higher level character can start to ignore this penalty, as his bonuses are higher.

9.2 TRAINING PACKAGES

Training packages are great ways for characters who are just starting out to get a jump on some important skills and abilities. However, a GM should carefully consider all training packages before including them in his world (as some packages may be inappropriate to the setting). But more importantly, GMs should be very careful before lowering any costs for Training Packages (either in time or Development Points) or when he is assigning costs to new Training Packages (that he develops).



9.2.1 APPROPRIATE TO THE SETTING

GMs should examine each training package presented in the *RMSR* for appropriateness in the setting he is planning to use. Some training packages may not be appropriate to the setting at all. For example, in a world where magic is highly illegal and hard to come by, the Amateur Mage training package might not be available; or in a setting placed deep in the heart of an expansive desert, a Sailor may not be appropriate.

9.2.2 ADJUSTING COSTS

Obviously, there are two ways to adjust costs: raising them or lowering them. In general, raising the cost of training package should rarely pose any threat to game balance (it would simply indicate that the package is more rare in the campaign setting; but not completely prohibited). However, care should be taken not to raise the cost too high, or it may be more economical (in Development Points) to purchase the skills gained through the package separately (though characters would not then get the other benefits of the package).

However, lowering training package costs should rarely be done. All of the costs were analyzed and balanced based upon the average number of Development Points available to a character in conjunction with the normal cost to develop the skills gained in the package. If the costs are lowered, you will run the danger of creating undesirable loopholes for players to manipulate.

9.2.3 CREATING NEW TRAINING PACKAGES

There are basically six factors to consider when creating new training packages: type of training package (vocational or lifestyle), time to acquire, special benefits, skills ranks (including category ranks), and cost to purchase.

Type of Training Package

One of the most important questions that must be answered is what type of training package is this to be. In some cases, it may be obvious. If the nature of the package is such that it defines an occupation that a character could have, it is probably vocational; otherwise, it is probably lifestyle.

However, a truer test is to ask this question: Should a first level character be able to have both this new package and any of the existing lifestyle packages? When answering this question, examine the game balance (e.g., is the character getting five more ranks in weapon skills, or lots of ranks in spells?). If the answer to the question is no, the package should be a lifestyle (remember that a character can only have one lifestyle package at a time). Otherwise, the package is probably perfectly fine as a vocation. You will notice that there are many packages that logically seem to be a lifestyle, but are deemed vocational because of the restrictions on availability.

Time to Acquire

The time to acquire the training package is tied to two things: the type of package and the number of skill ranks (and skill category ranks; whether or not the package gives a stat gain roll is also a factor) gained from the package. Lifestyle packages take significantly longer to acquire than vocations. Beyond that, the more skill ranks gained, the longer the package takes to acquire.

The exact formulas will not be discussed here. However, remember that it cannot hurt to have the package take too long. It can be devastating (on game balance) if it takes too little time to gain the benefits.

Special Benefits

There are two types of special benefits that can be gained from a training package: items/things (including favors, contacts, etc.) and Stat Gain Rolls. Stat Gain Rolls should only be awarded for lifestyle type packages (and not on all of them). Only if the concept of the package puts a lot of emphasis on a single stat should that stat get a stat gain roll. No packages should award more than one stat gain roll (the exceptions to this have already been defined in the RMSR; there should be no further exceptions). Very few packages would ever give a choice of stats for a Stat Gain Roll.

Special items/things are easier. The GM should come up with a list of four to ten neat benefits that could be gained in the time spent gaining this package. About 40% to 60% of the things should be non-material in nature (i.e., a special contact, a favor, etc.). When the thing is material in nature, it should not award more than a +10 to a combat-type skill, or a +20 to a non-combat skill (generally, the more obscure/specialized the skill, the higher bonuses are appropriate).

After selecting the list of things to be gained, take the thing that everyone within the profession should have at the minimum (this thing goes at the end of the list). Then order the list according to how you want the things to be checked; and finally assign some percentages to acquire. Remember that the things do not have to be ordered from higher percentage to lower percentage. See the RMSR for sample special benefits and how to arrange them and assign percentages.

Skill Ranks

Again this is not too hard. Try not to put too many skills in the package; but also try not to put too few (use the existing packages as a guideline). As a general guideline, remember that if a skill is used in combat (in any fashion), it should only receive one or two ranks. Other skills can have more ranks assigned to them. If a particular skill is appropriate for the package, remember to assign at least one rank in the category for that skill (if skill category ranks can be developed in the category).

Once again, use the existing packages as a guideline. Remember that if you award more than two ranks in a weapon/attack skill, only two ranks can be awarded to a single weapon/attack.

Cost to Purchase

So how were those costs figured anyway?

Good question and one that cannot be answered easily. Basically, the cost was keyed to how much it would have cost to develop all of the skills gained in the package (if the package were not available). Another modifier was given if a Stat Gain Roll was given as a benefit. Finally, the better benefits can also weight the cost.

All of these were totalled, then 75% of the total was figured as the base costs. This was then applied to a sliding exponential scale.

Well, anyway, just use the prices given in the RMSR as a guideline. As a general note, a vocational package should cost around 12-20 points for the most appropriate profession to purchase that package. A lifestyle package should cost around 25 to 30 points for the most appropriate profession to purchase that package.

Warning! *Be very careful about making training packages too cheap! Training packages are an easy way for a character to get a lot of power very quickly.*

Two New Training Packages

Here are samples of two new training packages.

Artist (V)

The artist has made a life of crafting pieces of artwork. Most artists have a patron who provides them with a place to live and the means to live in return for the creations they produce.

Time to Acquire: 28 months

Starting Money: normal + d10 (open-ended)

Special:

Fine set of art supplies (+15 to one type of art skill)	40
Wealthy patron (d10 sp/month allowance)	20
Good set of art supplies (+10 to one art skill)	50
Patron (d10 bp/month allowance)	50
Set of art supplies (+5 to a specific art)	60
A good reputation	0

Category or Skill	# of ranks
Artistic • Active skill category	1
choice of one skill	1
Artistic • Passive skill category	2
choice of up to three skills	5 (total)
Craft skill category	0
choice of up to three skills	3 (total)

Stat Gains: none

Civil Servant (V)

Civil Servants are paid public officials. In this respect, they are similar to City Guards. However, their duties are usually very bureaucratic in nature.

Time to Acquire: 21 months

Starting Money: normal + d10

Special:

Useful city contacts	20
Useful city contacts	20
Owed a favor from a citizen	50
Owed a favor from a citizen	30
Owed a favor from a religious figure	10
Owed a favor from a city official	50
Close friend in the City Guard	0

Category or Skill	# of ranks
Urban skill category	2
choice of up to two skills	2 (total)
Technical/Trade • General skill category	2
choice of up to two skills	2 (total)
Technical/Trade • Vocational skill category	0
Administration	2

Stat Gains: none

9.3 RACES

Most GMs will simply use all of the races presented in the *RMSR*. However, GMs should make sure that all races are appropriate for his world. In addition, it may be necessary to create a new race for the game setting. Here are some guidelines to use when creating a new race.

Appropriate to Game Setting

Make sure that the races you allow in your game are appropriate to the game setting. For example, if there are no elves to be found in your world, then players should not be building elven characters. As a side note, it may be that you do not want players to play certain races, but want to allow those races as NPCs. This is fine! Simply make sure your players are aware of this decision when they are designing their characters.

Creating New Races

Because of the intricate nature of race and mechanics interaction, creating new races should only be attempted when absolutely necessary. The subtle nature of the dangers you can create are often very hard to detect until it is too late.

Some of the most profound mechanics affected by race are: adolescence ranks, number of background options, types of skills available for hobbies, stat bonuses, hit progressions, power point progressions, resistance roll modifications, everyman skills, etc.

When creating a new race, the best thing to do is to pick one of the standard races (in the *RMSR*) and use it as a guideline. If you do this, you are less likely to create an inadvertent game imbalance. This is particularly true when you realize how many game mechanics are defined by race (there are a lot of traps to fall into if you are not careful).

9.4 PROFESSIONS

Creating professions is a very delicate matter. There are many, many aspects of game balance to consider when creating a new profession. You should not assume that by taking an existing profession and lowering one skill cost while raising another, the profession is balanced! It is much more complicated than that. However, we are not going to discuss the intricacies of designing new professions here.

Instead, we will discussion something that seems obvious; restricting profession use. Regardless of how many professions are presented, a GM should never assume that they are all available and/or appropriate to his gaming world. Some professions may need to be prohibited (e.g., maybe there are no hybrid spell users in his world, or no Warrior Monks). Sometimes, simple restrictions will apply (e.g., Dabblers are allowed, but they may only take four base lists).

One other possibility would be to create a point-based system where a player "purchases" his profession and possibly also his race (we will call these points Character Points). This is a very attractive system, and it (by its nature) is customized to the gaming world. For example, if Warrior Monks are rare, make them cost more Character Points. The same for races. If Dwarves are available, but are very uncommon, increase the Character Point cost.

If you are using a Character Point cost system, it is also possible to allow starting characters to begin at higher levels, but they must be of the most common professions and races. This encourages players to play those common professions and races!

Talent Law will detail methods for creating point systems around races and professions.

9.5 TALENTS AND FLAWS

The Talents and Flaws system presented in **RMSR** was designed presuming a typical fantasy role playing world. It may be necessary to adjust the results slightly. You will notice that certain results are classified as "high culture" results and some are classified as "magical" results. A GM can easily control the availability of specific results by using these mechanisms. In addition, he could devise some other similar category of results and control the outcome even more. For example, if the GM decides that no character should have more than one extra bonus to a stat bonus, he can label all such results and make a notation to that effect.

9.6 SKILLS

The list of skills presented in **RMSR** is not intended to be comprehensive. GMs should feel free to add any number of skills he likes. With the skill category system, he must simply decide which category the skill falls into and put it there. For example, if Sword Dancing is a popular form of entertainment in a given world, the GM should probably insert a new skill for it. By examining the skill categories, he will notice that the skill probably falls under the category of Artistic • Active (though arguments could be made to make it an Athletic • Gymnastic skill).

Sometimes, it might be appropriate to have a given skill in more than one category (Athletic Games is an example of this). In this case, make sure that the players understand that by being in different categories it means they will be using the skill in different ways. In the above example, the GM might put the skill in both Artistic • Active and Athletic • Gymnastic; however, if the character develops the skill under the Athletic • Gymnastic, he will not appear graceful at all (though he could perform the moves athletically).

9.7 HOUSE RULES

Because of the volume of extra rules, optional rules, and rules variants, GMs should always make sure that the players know exactly what rules are being used at any given time. Care should be taken when introducing a new optional rule in the middle of a currently running campaign; as this can have drastic effects on character development and/or game balance. Do not assume that you must adopt everything as "law" as soon as you read about it. Remember that your game was probably working just fine without the new rules!

It is usually very helpful to actually document all rule variants and optional rules that are being used in a game. If you are using any non-standard rules in your game, you should definitely document them. All of the above can be assembled into a player packet that can be given to all players in the game.

INVISIBILITY AND ILLUSIONS

Two of the most complicated spells in the ***Rolemaster*** spell system are *Invisibility* and *Illusions* (including *Phantasms*). Because of theses spells offer so much confusion, this section will address some of the more complex points about each.

Option: The skill of Spell Mastery allows the caster to violate the guidelines presented below. The exact level of difficulty should be determined by the GM (and should vary according to the circumstances).



10.1 INVISIBILITY

Before beginning to discuss *Invisibility*, it should be pointed out that the following guidelines apply only to the *Invisibility* and *Unseen* spells (i.e., all spells with *Invisibility* or *Unseen* in their title). These guidelines do not apply to the *Cloaking* spells. The *Cloaking* spells have a similar result to *Invisibility/Unseen*, but accomplish the results in a completely different fashion.

10.1.1 AREA AFFECTED

The first point to understand with *Invisibility* is that it is cast on a target (that may be mobile). Because the spell is an elemental spell, there are no RRs involved.

In addition, only all things entirely within the radius at the time are actually turned invisible (e.g., you cannot turn invisible next to a wall in hopes of having part of the wall turn invisible). After the casting, nothing else becomes invisible when it enters the radius. Thus, if a person cast *Invisibility I* on himself, and then picks up a cup, the cup would appear to float in the air (becoming obvious that there is magic at work).

Note that the radius is always in effect. If a character with an *Invisibility Sphere I* moves through a room, anything within 10' would "blur" slightly as he moved through the room. This is the nature of the fringe effect described in *Spell Law* (page 227). For other special visibility rules, see *Spell Law*, page 227.

Finally, note that while invisible, the target cannot see other invisible objects. Thus, if a character has an *Invisibility Sphere I* cast upon him (and all people/objects within 10' are also turned invisible), he does not automatically know the location of all invisible things within the radius (i.e., he will have to feel around for them or find them in some other fashion).

Option: An *Unseen* spell must be cast upon a whole object (not part of an object). For large or complex objects, this may require the use of higher level *Unseen* spells. Thus, a character cannot cast *Unseen I* on a single slat of a door; instead he must use an *Unseen V*.

10.1.2 DURATION

The basic duration of *Invisibility* is 24 hours. However, there are several circumstances that cause the spell to end prematurely. Each is discussed below.

The most common way *Invisibility* ends prematurely is when the caster to cancel the spell. Remember that the caster must be within the normal sensing range for the spell (i.e., if the target was not invisible, the caster must be able to see him).

Another way to end an *Invisibility* spell early is for the target to make an attack. In this case, the violent intent causes the spell to expire–regardless of the actual result of the attack (e.g., the attack could miss entirely).

The final way to end an *Invisibility* spell early is for the target to be struck by a violent blow. This is a little more tricky to handle. In the simplest case, if the target is struck by an attack, he will become visible. This includes the case of a sword turned invisible and striking something (as the sword is struck violently by the target of the attack). In most cases, it should be obvious when the blow is violent enough to dispel the spell.

However, even a simple shove may negate the spell. If it is ever unclear whether the target should become visible from an action, have the target make a maneuver roll (base the difficulty on the nature of the maneuver). If successful, the target has remained invisible.

As a final note, remember that all attacks against invisible target (including "detected" invisible targets) suffer a penalty. See *Spell Law*, page 227 for more information on these penalties.

10.2 ILLUSIONS

All of the following discussion applies to *Phantasms* as well as *Illusions* (the last section deals with the differences between *Phantasms* and *Illusions*). For more information on *Illusions*, see *Spell Law*, page 232-233.

10.2.1 NATURE OF ILLUSIONS

The most complex aspect of illusions is grasping that the spell is actually creating a "real" sensory effect. For example, think of a *Light Mirage* as a hologram. It actually exists and cannot be "disbelieved" by those viewing it. However, those viewing it would probably determine it was not "real" after they tried to touch it.

Now extrapolate that to each sense. For example, a *Sound Mirage* could replicate the sound of a bell (though the bell itself does not exist). A *Smell Mirage* could replicate the smell of a specific perfume (though the perfume is no where to be found). A *Taste Mirage* could make a crusty loaf of bread taste like a slice of blueberry pie (though it would have the consistency of a crust of bread).

The complicated sense is touch: the *Feel Mirage*. A *Feel Mirage* could cause an object to feel like another object. For example, a hard wooden chair would feel comfortable and soft (though it would still look like a hard, wooden chair). It should be noted that a *Feel Mirage* cannot make an attack; only a *Strike* spell can make an attack (and uses an OB equal to the caster's Directed Spell bonus with *Strike* spells). Also note that a *Feel Mirage* (and a *Strike* spell) does not allow the false sense to "grasp" a real object. As a good rule of thumb, an object can be made to feel like any other object, but that object cannot "feel" any other objects. Unlike other mirages, a *Feel Mirage* can be dispelled by striking it (it is generally safe to use the rules for striking invisible objects when this becomes an issue).

All in all, the *Mirages* are not too powerful by themselves. As already noted, the people sensing the effect can probably discern the illusion because of one of their other senses, and the illusion has a limited duration. The *Feel Mirage* is the most powerful, but it is a 5th level spell (as a comparison, a 2nd level Closed Essence spell will summon a real creature for the same duration). To get a similar illusionary beast would cost the caster 8 PPs (or 11 PPs if he wanted to disguise it to "detection" type spells).

10.2.2 ILLUSION MASTERY

The complexity arises when the caster begins using the Illusion Mastery list (allowing him to combine the effects from the other lists into one illusion). This makes complex illusions cheaper to cast. However, casters need to remember that they must know the proper "mirage" spells before they can be used in an *Illusion*. Thus, to encompass a *Feel Mirage* into a *Illusion*, the caster must know the Feel-Taste-Smell list to at least 5th level. Thus, the casting cost may be cheaper, but the development cost is more expensive.

It should be noted that when using a *Phantasm*, a *Feel Mirage* may make an attack. However, the directed spell bonus is not the same as the directed spell bonus used with a *Strike* spell.

Option: The directed spell bonus for a *Phantasm* spell and the directed spell bonus for the *Strike* spell are the same bonus (and can be used interchangeably).

Note that an Illusionist can actually create an object by using a 6th level spell (combining all 5 senses). Of course, the object is temporary (only 1 minute per level) and is subject to detection by dispelling it's *Feel Mirage*; but it is, for all intents and purposes, a real object.

10.2.3 MOVEMENT AND ILLUSIONS

Illusions cannot move real objects very easily. A *Feel Mirage* can support/lift up to 5 pounds without difficulty. However, for every pound (or fraction thereof) over 5, there is a 1% chance that the *Feel Mirage* will be dispelled. This chance is checked every round that the excess weight is applied against the illusion.

In addition, the maximum amount of damage that can result from an illusionary movement/attack is the same as a Martial Arts Strike I attack. Thus, an illusion of a rock, falling from 100' up and landing on someone's head would do no more damage than an illusionary tree branch swung by a illusionary troll (all of them would use the caster's directed spell OB).

10.2.4 ILLUSIONS OR PHANTASMS

It is very important to distinguish between *Illusions* and *Phantasms*. If the "not real" scene or object moves, it must be a phantasm. An *Illusion* can never move (or have the appearance of movement). Also, remember that a *Phantasm* cannot move without concentration from the caster (with some limited exceptions, see *Spell Law*, page 95—*Phantasm II* description).

DISEASES AND POISONS

11.1 DISEASES

Disease strikes almost everywhere at one time or another. In ***Rolemaster***, it can be part of a character's background (e.g., Skhan has a hereditary disease which leads to a drooling problem), a spell, or a simple decision/calculation on the part of the gamemaster that a specific setting is suffering.

A character attacked by a disease must make a resistance roll (RR), comparing his own level with that of the disease. The victim adds his Disease resistance modifiers to the roll (usually Constitution stat bonus plus racial modifications to disease resistance). If the victim fails the RR, the gamemaster should determine the degree of failure by comparing the final RR with the number needed to succeed. Unless the disease is described otherwise (e.g., the disease delivers only moderate effects), the amount by which the RR was failed indicates the severity of the effect. Use the chart below to determine the severity of the effect.

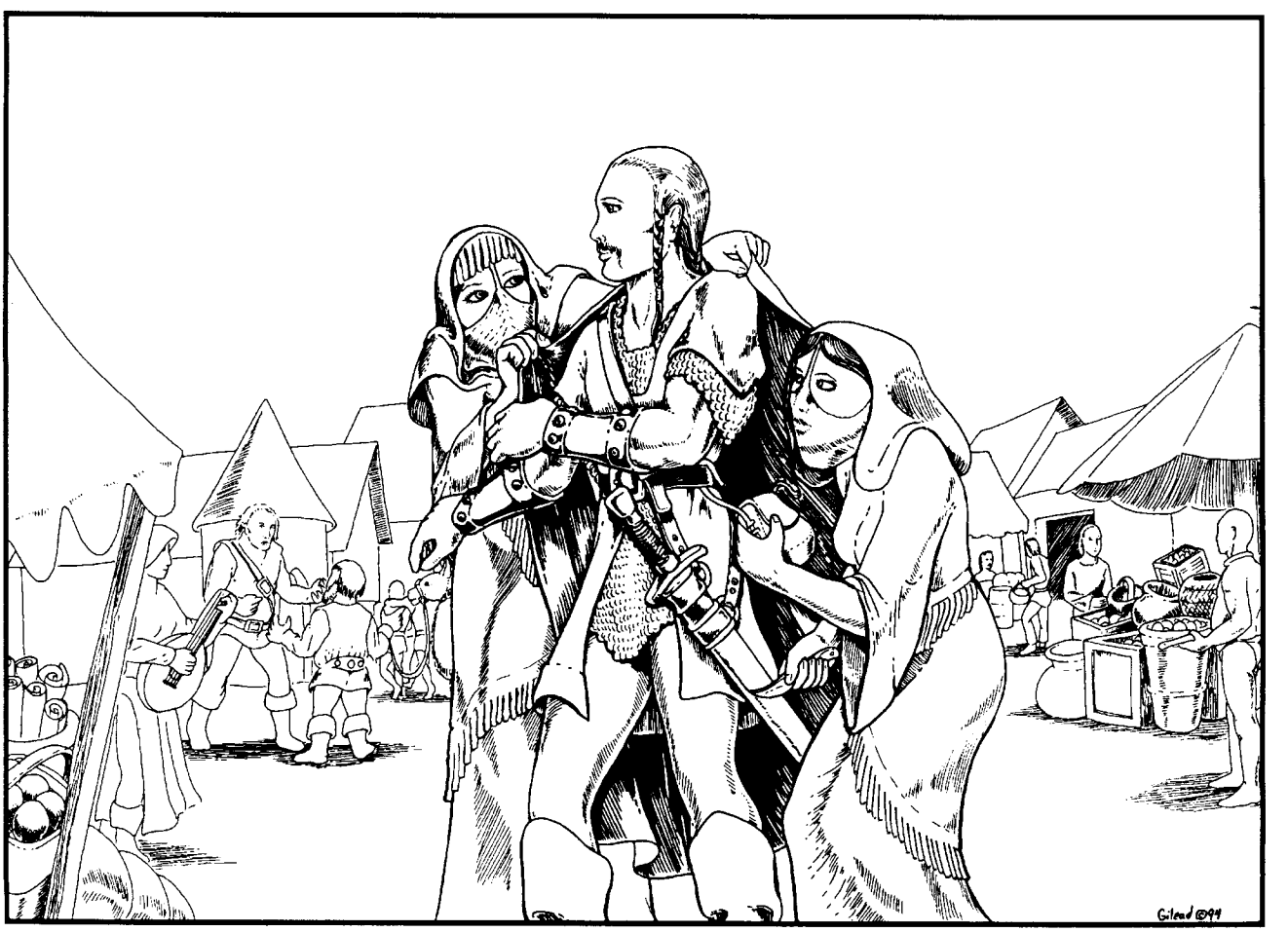
DISEASE/POISON SEVERITY CHART

RR Failure	Effect Severity
01-25	mild
26-50	moderate
51-100	severe
101+	extreme

Many diseases are described in the Disease Chart below. For convenience's sake, they are grouped in 5 categories, according to effect/transmission:

1) bubonic: includes any viral or bacterial disease resulting from organisms that reside in the blood or other bodily fluids.
2) chemical: includes all forms of chemical dependence on herbs, drugs, alcohol, etc. or slow physical deterioration as a result of chemical alteration.
3) genetic: includes hereditary diseases (e.g., dyslexia, hemophilia, etc.).
4) pneumonic: includes any viral or bacterial disease carried in the air (i.e., transmitted by mist or breath).
5) psychiatric: includes neuroses (e.g., anxieties, obsessions, phobias, etc.) and psychoses (e.g., multiple personality, psychopathy, etc.).

After a given disease is healed (or run its course), use the Disease and Poison Recovery Chart to determine how long it takes to recover from the disease. Roll d100 (open-ended) and add the victim's Constitution stat bonus (not the victim's Disease resistance modifier). Index the result on the appropriate section of the chart below to determine the number of days needed to recover from the disease.



DISEASE/POISON RECOVERY CHART

Bubonic	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extreme*
-26 or less	13	21	86	173
-25 – 15	9	14	59	120
16 – 35	6	10	40	80
36 – 65	4	6	26	53
66 – 90	3	5	20	40
91 – 105	2	3	13	27
106 or more	1	2	7	13

Chemical	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extreme*
-26 or less	12	31	139	239
-25 – 15	8	21	93	159
16 – 35	6	16	70	119
36 – 65	4	10	46	80
66 – 90	3	8	35	60
91 – 105	2	5	23	40
106 or more	1	3	12	20

Note: This is the amount of recovery time after withdrawal. See the section on Chemical Diseases for more on withdrawal.

Genetic	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extreme*
-26 or less	8	26	53	106
-25 – 15	5	17	33	67
16 – 35	3	10	20	40
36 – 65	2	7	13	27
66 or more	1	3	7	13

Note: This represents the amount of time needed to adjust to life without the disability.

Pneumonic	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extreme*
-26 or less	14	35	70	140
-25 – 15	9	23	45	180
16 – 35	6	15	30	120
36 – 65	4	10	20	80
66 – 90	3	8	15	60
91 – 105	2	5	10	40
106 or more	1	3	5	20

Psychiatric	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extreme*
-26 or less	7	67	645	6,193
-25 – 15	5	48	461	4,423
16 – 35	3	29	277	2,654
36 – 65	2	19	184	1,769
66 or more	1	10	92	885

Note: This represents the amount of time needed to adjust to life without the disability. During this time victims must make RRs every time a situation that might "rekindle" the old condition arises.

Poisons	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extreme*
-26 or less	4	7	10	20
-25 – 15	3	5	8	15
16 – 65	2	4	5	10
66 or more	1	2	3	5

*Extreme cases of disease and poison always result in death. Use this column only if the victim of the disease is cured before the death occurs.

11.1.1 SPECIAL RECOVERY NOTES

Bubonic

Victims of bubonic diseases start off with a -100 penalty while recovering. To recover, the victim must spend the indicated amount of time in bed rest. The penalty will be lowered for each day of rest. To determine how much to lower the penalty, divide -100 by the number of days needed to recover. Round off any fractions and apply any leftover penalty to the amount recovered in the first day. If the victim moves around, the recovery time is temporarily halted (and the current penalties will apply to all he does).

Chemical

All intoxicants and herbs (chemicals) are given an addiction factor (AF). Every time a dose of the herb is taken, the GM should roll d100 (not open-ended) and add the AF. If the character is currently addicted to the chemical, add the level of the addiction as well. If the result is over 100, the character has become (more) addicted to the substance. The character's addiction level increases by 1. For each level of addiction, the character must take 1 dose of the chemical per week. Thus, a Level 4 addiction to an herb means that the character must take 4 doses of the herb every week.

There are two ways to heal a chemical dependency: magical healing and cold turkey withdrawal. Magical healing is presumed to have no side effects and can simply use the chart above to determine the amount of time needed after the dependency is healed. For those characters without access to magical healing of addiction, they will have to deal with cold-turkey withdrawal.

To begin the process of cold-turkey withdrawal, the character must start off a day without using the substance. He must then make a d100 roll (open-ended) modified by the level of addiction times -1 (e.g., a 4th level addiction has a -4 modifier), his Constitution stat bonus (no racial modifiers for poison resistance), and penalties gained by previous rolls on this chart. Look up the result on the chart below.

WITHDRAWAL CHART

Roll	Hits Taken	Co Lost	Penalty
-50 or less	d10+9	d10+10	-90
-40 – -31	d10+8	d10+9	-65
-30 – -21	d10+7	d10+8	-45
-20 – -11	d10+6	d10+7	-30
-10 – 0	d10+5	d10+6	-20
01 – 10	d10+4	d10+5	-15
11 – 20	d10+3	d10+4	-15
21 – 30	d10+2	d10+3	-10
31 – 40	d10+1	d10+2	-10
41 – 50	d10	d10+1	-10
51 – 60	d10-1	d10	-5
61 – 70	d10-2	d10-1	-5
71 – 80	d10-3	d10-2	-5
81 – 90	d10-4	d10-3	-5
91 – 100	d10-5	d10-4	-0
101 or more	—	d10-5	-0

Note: if the result is 101 or more, the level of addiction is dropped by 1.

The penalties gained by rolling on this chart are cumulative with each other and last until the addiction is healed (i.e., withdrawal is complete) or until the character gets a "fix" of the substance (note that a fix is equal to a number of doses equal to the level of the addiction). If the withdrawal is completed, the total penalties are recovered as per the normal recovery rules. If the character fails to complete withdrawal because he got a "fix" of the substance, all penalties are removed immediately, but the addiction level jumps up one.

If the character falls unconscious due to hits taken, the withdrawal will continue to have effects. The character will heal 1 hit per hour of unconsciousness, and may rise to consciousness, but will suffer further loss the next day.

It should be noted that a character sometimes suffers withdrawal not by choice. If a required period (1 week) passes without the victim receiving his "fix" of the substance, he must roll on the withdrawal chart for each day until he gets his "fix."

Genetic

Genetic diseases do not naturally heal themselves. In a medieval fantasy setting, the only ways to heal these diseases should be magically.

After a genetic disease is healed, the recovery time shown in the chart represents the time to adjust to life without the disease. A character will start off with a -50 penalty when fully healed from a genetic disease. This penalty will decrease as long as the character lives his normal life.

To determine the daily amount of recovery per day, divide -50 by the number of days needed to recover (as determined on the recovery chart). Round off any fractions and apply any leftover penalty to the amount recovered on the first day.

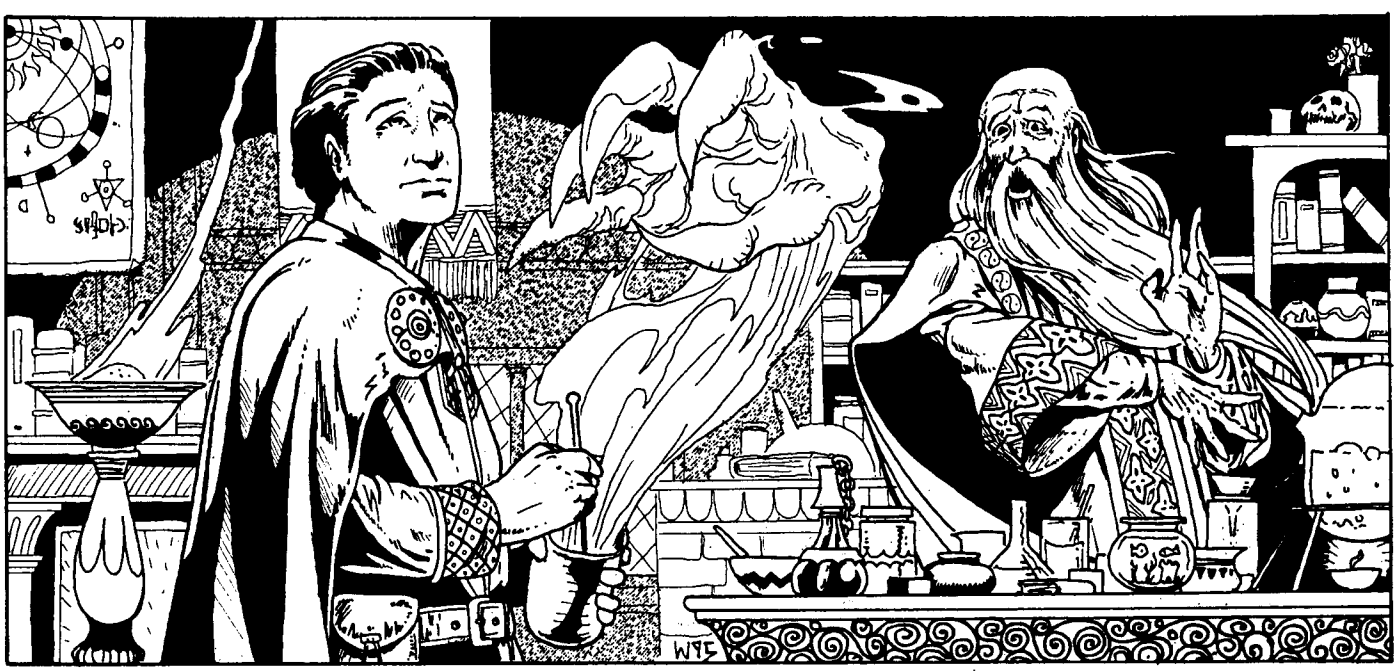
Pneumonic

Victims of pneumonic diseases start off with a -100 penalty while recovering. To recover, the victim must spend the indicated amount of time in bed rest. The penalty will be lowered for each day of rest. To determine how much to lower the penalty, divide -100 by the number of days needed to recover. Round any fractions and apply any leftover penalty to the amount recovered in the first day. If the victim moves around, the recovery time is temporarily halted (and the current penalties will apply to all he does).

Psychiatric

A gamemaster will have to determine when a character is cured of psychiatric diseases. Most of the psychiatric diseases fall outside the spectrum of normal disease healing (as these diseases affect the mind just as much or more than they affect the body).

Even when cured, a character has urges to do things that he is cured of. The recovery time shown in the recovery chart shows the time needed to completely overcome the urges to "go back" to the old ways. Every time a character is presented with a situation that might tempt him to do something that he has been cured of, he should roll a d100 (open-ended) modified by the character's Self Discipline stat bonus and +1 for each previous successful check against temptation. There is an additional modifier based upon the severity of the previous condition: +10 for a Mild condition, +0 for a Moderate condition, -20 for a Severe condition, -50 for an Extreme condition. If the result is over 100, the character has resisted the temptation and continues to recover. If the result is less than 100, he slips back into his old ways and the recovery process must begin again (he is still cured, but must roll for recovery time again).



11.1.2 DISEASE DESCRIPTIONS

EFFECT DESCRIPTIONS

These general descriptions and specific effects of certain diseases will vary, even if classified according to these categories. For disease descriptions located elsewhere in ***Rolemaster***, treat the stated effect as extreme, applying the mild, moderate, and severe effects from this chart if the victim's RR indicates a lesser severity level.

As with poisons, the effects are cumulative, so that a victim beset with two impairments — one reducing his activity by -20 and the other by -15 — is actually at -35. A victim experiencing serious effects must also weather moderate and mild effects. The effects of upper level severities include all the lower severity results in the same category. See the Poisons Chart for a description of the time and area of effect.

Bubonic

Transmission: Injection.

Description: Strikes in 1-10 days.

Mild — rashes; mild glandular swelling; fever (-15).

Moderate — inflammations and swelling in the glands, particularly in the armpit and groin areas (-25); puss-filled infections (10% chance of immobilization for each limb or eye).

Severe — lesions ooze puss; bleeding through pores; high fever; complete immobilization (50% chance of coma for 1-50 days).

Extreme — death due to viral or bacterial infection in 1-20 days.

Chemical

Transmission: Ingestion.

Description: Strikes after continued exposure or use. See rules for addiction.

Mild — no significant permanent damage; withdrawal results in mild spasms, sweating, and irritability (-15).

Moderate — occasional hallucinations (5% chance; -25); intermittent spasms (5% chance; -35); double vision (10% chance; -40); impaired Memory and Agility (-1 to -10 temp stat); withdrawal results in immobility.

Severe — frequent hallucinations (10% chance; -50); intermittent fevers; shaking; weakened temporary stats (d100-1 to each stat); withdrawal results in immobility.

Extreme — slow death (1-50 months) due to destruction of internal organs (e.g., liver, kidneys, intestines); withdrawal results in immobility.

Genetic

Transmission: Hereditary.

Description: Strikes prior to outset of character's entry into game or at a random moment during the game (e.g., whenever he rolls and unmodified 123).

Mild — 01-80 = an allergy; 81-100 = mild dyslexia (double development cost for written languages and -20 to reading attempts). For allergies, roll 2d10 with the following results: 2-4 = a specific type of herb or medicine; 5-7 = alcohol; 8-9 = dairy products; 10 = ragweed; 11 = pollen; 12 = a specific sweetener; 13-14 = a specific common plant; 15-17 = wheat products; 18-20 = a specific kind of meat

Moderate — 01-30 = epilepsy (any unmodified roll of 03 by character results in immobilizing seizure lasting d100 rounds); 31-50 = color-blindness; 51-80 = pronounced dyslexia (quadruple development cost for written languages and -40 to reading attempts); 81-00 = narcolepsy (any unmodified roll of 02 by character results in 2-20 rounds of unstirrable sleep). For color-blindness, roll 2d10 with the following results: 2-6 = complete color-blindness; 7-13 = red/green color-blindness; 14-20 = blue/orange color-blindness.

Severe — 01-20 = cell anemia (character immune to specific disease such as malaria but has a -25 Constitution penalty and bleeds at double normal rate); 21-60 = hemophilia (character bleeds at four times normal rate); 61-100 = diabetes (-30 Constitution penalty and character must prepare own food specially or have a 50% chance of entering a coma for d10 hours).

Extreme — death in d100 days due to a cancer, or some extreme form of the plights listed above.

Pneumonic

Transmission: Inhalation.

Description: Strikes in d100 hours after exposure.

Mild — fever; sweating; dizziness (-20).

Moderate — raging fever (-25); infected wounds (if any; -50); instability (-50 to moving maneuvers and missile attacks);

Severe — immobilizing coma for d100 day;

Extreme — death due to viral or bacterial infection in d100 hours.

Psychiatric

Transmission: Environment.

Description: Strikes randomly, often as a result of trauma.

Mild — mild neuroses. Roll d100 with the following results: 01-10 = communication difficulty (e.g., stuttering); 11-25 = obsession (e.g., cleanliness); 26-40 = anger (e.g., directed grudge); 41-100 = light phobias (e.g., vertigo, claustrophobia, etc.).

Moderate — strong neuroses. Roll d100 with the following results: 01-08 = strong phobia of groups; 09-15 = strong phobia of open spaces; 16-30 = strong phobia of heights; 31-45 = strong phobia of confined spaces; 46-52 = strong phobia of water; 53-60 = strong phobia of a specific animal; 61-68 = strong phobia of storms; 69-75 = strong phobia of fast movement; 76-80 = sexual fetish for a particular type of object; 81-85 = sexual voyeurism; 86-90 = sexual addiction; 91-92 = cross-gender attraction; 93-94 = sexual exhibitionism; 95-96 = compulsive sexual attraction to children or dead bodies; 97-98 = sexual sadism; 99-100 = sexual masochism.

Severe — psychoses. Roll d100 with the following results: 01-25 = manic/depression; 26-50 = paranoia; 51-75 = schizophrenia; 76-90 = hysteria; 91-100 = multiple personalities.

Extreme — death in d50 weeks. Roll d100 with the following results: 01-90 = suicide; 91-100 = murder/suicide.

11.2 POISONS

Like diseases, poisons add spice and intrigue to a game. Some characters use them to coat weapons, while others perish after ingesting a tasty but poisonous draught. Their hidden dangers are frightening.

Poisons come in many forms. A variety is detailed in the Poison Chart below. In addition, specific poisons are listed in Section 13. Poisons are grouped into 6 effect categories.

1) circulatory
2) conversion
3) muscle
4) nerve
5) reduction
6) respiratory

Handle resistance rolls versus poison according to the disease RR guidelines above (determining the severity of the failure). Recovery from the effects of poisons should proceed in a manner similar to recovery from disease (see the Disease and Poison Recover Chart).

The Poison Chart (below) delineates the impact of six categories of poisons, based on their severity of effect (severity level). Effects are cumulative, so that a victim beset with two impairments — one reducing his activity by -15 and the other by -25 — is actually at -40. The effects of upper level severities include all the lower severity results in the same category. A victim experiencing serious effects must also weather moderate and mild effects.

11.2.1 TIME TO EFFECT

The time at which an effect sets in is variable (shown in the chart). However, greater effects cannot precede lesser effects, although they can be simultaneous. GMs should roll the time for the most severe effect first, thereby dictating the upper limit for lesser symptoms.

11.2.2 AREA AFFECTED

The area affected by a poison often varies. Sometimes the victim's actions or the attack dictate the point of entry and the area first affected (e.g., a maneuver of critical strike indicates that the snake injects the nerve poison in the victim's leg), but occasionally there will be no indication of the initially affected spot. In this case, use the following location chart.

Poison Type	**Areas Affected** (suggested sequence)
Circulatory	feet, legs, hands, arms, abdomen, chest, neck, head.
Conversion	kidneys, bowels, intestines, stomach, liver, lungs, heart, throat, brain, legs, arms.
Muscle	hands, arms, shoulders, feet, legs, hips, jaw, nose, ears, eyes, bowels, heart.
Nerve	extremities, eyes, mouth, brain.
Reduction	kidneys, bowels, intestines, stomach, liver, lungs, heart, throat, brain, legs, arms.
Respiratory	lungs, throat, brain.

11.2.3 POISON DESCRIPTIONS

EFFECT DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions are general in nature. Specific effects of certain poisons will vary, even if classified according to these categories. For poison descriptions located elsewhere in ***Rolemaster***, ***Space Master***, or *Shadow World*, treat the stated effect as extreme, applying the mild, moderate, and severe effects from this chart if the victim's RR indicates a lesser severity level.

Circulatory Poisons

Mild — Beginning in 1-50 rounds and lasting 1-50 hours; swelling around the point of injection or ingestion; drowsiness (-15); slightly blurred vision (-25).

Moderate — Beginning in 3-30 rounds; lessening of motor coordination in legs (-25 for leg maneuvers) and arms (-25 for hand maneuvers); mild euphoria (-20).

Severe — Beginning in 5-50 rounds; discoloration and chills; incapacitating headaches (no activity; 1-10 hits/round until unconsciousness).

Extreme — Beginning in 10-100 rounds; death due to circulatory failure (i.e., oxygen starvation and associated waste poisoning).

Conversion Poisons

Mild — Beginning in 5-50 rounds and lasting 5-50 hours; queasiness and an upset stomach (2-20 hits; -20).

Moderate — Beginning in 10-100 rounds; painful vomiting (3-30 hits; 10% chance of incapacity each round).

Severe — Beginning in 2-200 rounds; partial conversion (1-100%) of bodily tissue to another form (with associated disability; death if area affected is a critical organ); victim at -51 to -100; lapse into unconsciousness 1-50 rounds after initial severe effect.

Extreme — Beginning in 20-200 rounds; complete transformation of bodily tissue to another form; death if area affected critical to survival.

Muscle Poisons

Mild — Beginning in 3-30 rounds and lasting 3-30 hours; light-headedness and swelling (-10); pain (1-5 hits/round).

Moderate — Beginning in 5-50 rounds; moderate loss of overall coordination (-30); in any given round, there is 5% chance muscles necessary to given action will not operate.

Severe — Beginning in 1-10 hours; fever and sweating; lapse into unconsciousness for 1-10 days.

Extreme — Beginning in 1-50 hours; death due to overall muscle failure (e.g., cessation of heart activity).

Nerve Poisons

Mild — Beginning in 1-10 rounds and lasting 1-10 hours; mild loss of thought and motor coordination (-30).

Moderate — Beginning in 1-20 rounds; nervous system shock (5-50 hits; -75).

Severe — Beginning in 2-20 rounds; stroke (-100); temporary stats reduced by 1-80 (d100 roll, ignoring 81-100).

Extreme — Beginning in 2-50 rounds; Death due to brain failure.

Reduction Poisons

Mild — Beginning in 10-100 rounds and lasting 10-100 hours; great pain (4 hits/round until unconscious).

Moderate — Beginning in 20-200 rounds; bleeding through pores (3 hits/round).

Severe — Beginning in 30-300 rounds; incapacitation; after 1-100 minutes lapse into coma lasting 1-100 days.

Extreme — Beginning in 1-10 hours; death due to dissolution of vital tissue and destruction of associated organs (e.g., liver reduced to fluid).

Respiratory Poisons

Mild — Beginning in 1-20 rounds and lasting 1-20 hours; mild euphoria (-20).

Moderate — Beginning in 2-20 rounds; significant euphoria (-50); choking pain (1-5 hits/round for 1-100 rounds).

Severe — Beginning in 1-100 rounds; uncontrollable coughing (1-10 hits/round for 1-10 rounds); lapse into unconsciousness; 50% chance of coma for 1-10 days.

Extreme — Beginning in 2-200 rounds; death due to respiratory failure and associated oxygen starvation.



ECONOMICS, COMMERCE, AND TRADING

12.1 ECONOMICS

Each world usually has one or more of its own coinage systems. Some are based on the worth of the coins' component material or craftsmanship; others are tied to the society's faith in the coins' producer or guarantor (e.g., the government backs their wooden nickels).

Obviously, a world rich in varying political entities and cultural groups rarely relies on only one coinage system. Silver might be worth more than gold in certain regions, while other locales may value stone pieces or have no coinage at all. Barter, after all, is the norm in most places lacking a central authority. We do suggest, however, that the GM establish a comparative standard in order to regulate exchange. This enables folk to compare the value of their goods, even if they are simply trying to trade six ferret skins for a sheep hide. It also makes it easy to weave a localized jade-based economy into an imperial system that embraces silver as its standard.

12.1.1 CHOOSING A SYSTEM

When selecting a monetary system to use, there are two things a GM must consider. The first is "flavor" and believability. The second is ease of use in play.

It is interesting when different societies have different types of coins and coinage systems. It is also very believable when this happens. Historically, there were nations across Europe that each used their own type of coin.

However, when more than one coinage system is used, the GM must create a believable system for coinage exchange. Unless the two nations have absolutely no dealings with each other, there will already be an exchange rate set up in the world. For example, a gold coin in Nation A is worth 3 silver coins in Nation B.

In most cases, all coins will probably be made of similar metals. For example, there will probably be silver coins through the realms. There may be instances of some nations have access to more of a given type of metal. This would result in that metal becoming the standard for the coinage system.

There is also the issue of banks. Public banking was rare in a medieval society. However, private institutions were known to exist. These individuals usually had access to superior methods of storing hard cash and always charged a healthy fee for doing so (10% was very common).

Very few nations of the medieval era used "paper" money or notes. However, it should not be precluded from a given fantasy setting. It is possible that a given noble would be so highly regarded that he could issue "notes" that could be exchanged for hard cash.

Finally, there is no reason that a monetary system should be limited to metal coins. It is perfectly reasonable to have a society where people use molded jade, obsidian, or some other material as their money. In a desert world, it is possible that water is used as money, or perhaps wood, or some other rare item. The only guideline that a GM must follow when choosing a material for his monetary system is that the material must be rare enough that only powerful (i.e., wealthy) people would have it.

12.1.2 EFFECTS OF WEALTH

The term wealth should be defined as all wealth, not just coins. This includes property, jewelry, and other items that have a value (e.g., cattle, ships, etc.). It is possible to have a large quantity of wealth without having much in the way of coins.

A GM must be very conscious of the amount of wealth the player characters have. If any given PC has 1,000 gold coins in his pocket plus some fancy jewelry totalling more than 1,000 gold in worth, what does the average duke have?

A GM should figure that, unless the PCs are nobility themselves, the average NPC low nobility (including wealthy merchants) should have at least 10 times more wealth than the PCs. Wealthy nobility could have as much as 100 or 1,000 times more.

As can be seen, the more wealth the PCs have, the more serious the question becomes. With a lot of wealth in a given country, the economics of the world comes to be questioned. If this nation has this much wealth, wouldn't they constantly be under attack of other less wealthy nations? Or are the other nations even more wealthy?

There is also the matter of the number of physical coins available. If the PCs have 1,000 gold coins, then the nobility around them will have 10 to 1,000 times that in their treasury. Looking at the most extreme example in history, the Spanish empire minted around 1,000,000 silver coins and several hundred thousand gold coins. This was TOTAL coins in circulation! With our example (1,000 gold coins), the PCs might have as much 1% of the total wealth of an average historical nation!

It might be possible that for a short time, the PCs are more wealthy than the local nobles. But this should only occur when the characters have unearthed a vast fortune from some forgotten society (of course, that fortune wasn't always lost...).

Note: *The price lists throughout the RM system assume a relatively wealthy nation with a large number of coins in circulation. If there are fewer coins in circulation, the prices shown should be used as guide to relative worth of the object.*

12.1.3 COINAGE STANDARDS

We suggest the following comparative exchange system, using coins of a uniform one quarter ounce weight.

Coin	Abbreviation	Breakdown
1 mithril piece	mp	= 10 pps
1 platinum piece	pp	= 10 gps
1 gold piece	gp	= 10 sps
1 silver piece	sp	= 10 bps
1 bronze piece	bp	= 10 cps
1 copper piece	cp	= 10 tps
1 tin piece	tp	= 10 iron pieces

This system revolves around a gold standard, assuming that a gold piece is the most valuable commonly used currency, although Mithril is more precious and silver coins are in much wider circulation. The GM may wish to tinker with the coin weights (e.g., using half-ounce or tenth-ounce currency), or add his own material standards (e.g., a jade piece [jp] = 2 sp). He might wish to remove bronze, tin, and iron pieces from general use, leaving copper coinage as the effective floor. Whatever the GM desires, this system works as a suggested guide and is employed in the price charts found throughout ***RM.***

12.2 COMMERCE AND TRADING

When a GM begins to handle trading and commerce in his world, there are two things he must understand. The first is whether or not the player characters are going to be trading a lot (e.g., are they going to become "merchants" in their own right). The second is that he must have some kind of understanding of resource allocation around his world (e.g., which countries mine salt, where is that spice grown, which countries make glass, etc.).

If the PCs are not going to make a habit of speculating in trade, the GM has much more flexibility in the rules he uses for trading. In general, he will be able to wing it (see The Simple System below). However, if the PCs are going to become "traders" and start adventuring just to find exotic items to trade, the GM should have a good system for trading. In addition, the GM should start considering the effects of guilds and other ruling bodies that might regulate merchants and the selling of goods.

If there is to be a fair amount of trading in his world, a GM should understand the resource allocation of his world. For example, where are heavy crossbows made? What province raises horses? What city is known for its fine statuary? Before a given commodity can be sold or bought, the GM should have a grasp of where the origins of that type of commodity are.

12.3 THE SIMPLE COMMERCE SYSTEM

If the GM needs a simple system to handle a trading situation, he can use these simplified systems for buying and selling goods.

When the PCs are attempting to purchase (or sell) an item, the GM should assign a difficulty of finding that item (e.g., Medium, Hard, Sheer Folly, etc.) or finding a buyer for that item. Have the player roll a d100 (open-ended) adding his Trading skill and subtracting the standard modifier for difficulty (-10 for Hard, -20 for Very Hard, etc.). Look up the result on the appropriate Static Manuever Table below.

Purchase Static Maneuver Table T–4.8.13A

-26 down Spectacular Failure: -50% • 1.5✱ • -30➡
You've been robbed! The person who claimed to have the goods you were looking for takes you to his wares, but actually robs you. There are no merchants in this area who have the item you seek. You can check again next month.

-25 — 04 Absolute Failure: -25% • 1.2✱ • -10➡
You have been swindled. The person selling you the goods has given you shoddy products that are not worth beans. You can attempt to find another merchant next week (with a -30 modifier).

05 — 75 Failure: 0% • 1.0✱ • +0➡
You find no one who is willing to sell you what you want. You can try again tomorrow.

UM 66 Unusual Event: 110% • 0.8✱ • +20➡
You discover someone who has exactly what you are looking for, and his prices are fair (100% of normal). However, in the middle of the transaction, the merchant dies. The GM should determine the exact cause of death.

76 — 90 Partial Success: 30% • 1.0✱ • +0➡
You find a merchant willing to sell you the goods, but at 200% of normal cost. If this is not acceptable, you may try again tomorrow.

UM 100 Unusual Success: 110% • 0.8✱ • +15➡
Not only do you find someone with the goods you are seeking, he is willing give them to you in return for a favor. He is generous and will allow you to take the goods on the promise that you will complete the favor. If you fail to do what you promise, he may come looking for you....

91 — 110 Near Success: 80% • 1.5✱ • +10➡
At last, a merchant who will be reasonable. He is willing to sell you the goods for 150% of normal price. If this is not acceptable, you can try again tomorrow (with a +10 modifier).

111 — 175 Success: 100% • 1.0✱ • +20➡
Wonderful! You have found a little shop that has exactly what you were looking for! In addition, you have haggled you way into paying 100% of the normal cost.

176 up Absolute Success: 120% • 0.8✱ • +30➡
A street peddler has the goods you are looking for. Lucky for you, he has no idea of the worth of the object(s) and you are able to get the goods for 75% of normal cost.

General and GM-Assigned Modifers

Routine	+30
Easy	+20
Light	+10
Medium	+0
Hard	-10
Very Hard	-20
Extremely Hard	-30
Sheer Folly	-50
Absurd	-70

Selling Static Maneuver Table T–4.8.13B

-26 down Spectacular Failure: -50% • 1.5✱ • -30➡
You found the perfect buyer! He was willing to pay 200% of the normal cost for the goods. Too bad he was lieing. Too bad he has a weapon and will take the goods for free....

-25 — 04 Absolute Failure: -25% • 1.2✱ • -10➡
What a bargain. You finally found someone who pays you 130% of your asking price. You deliver the goods, he delivers the payment. He leaves town, and you discover he has given you counterfiet money! The local authorities will attempt to find the swindler, but you have lost the goods.

05 — 75 Failure: 0% • 1.0✱ • +0➡
You have failed to find anyone to buy your goods (and you are starting to get a squeaky voice from giving your "pitch" all day long). You can try again tomorrow.

UM 66 Unusual Event: 110% • 0.8✱ • +20➡
You have found someone who wants you goods (and will pay 100% normal price). However, this person is convinced that you have sold them shoddy goods and have misrepresented your wares. He calls for the guards and the two of you must now resolve the dispute. If you get the goods back, you can try and sell them tomorrow.

76 — 90 Partial Success: 30% • 1.0✱ • +0➡
You have found someone who is willing to give you 50% of the normal price for the goods. They claim the quality is low or that the goods are very common. You can try again tomorrow.

UM 100 Unusual Success: 110% • 0.8✱ • +15➡
You find someone who really needs the goods you have. You start off asking three times normal and let him talk you down to two times (you get 200% normal price). He thinks you are the best merchant for these wares and will be recommending you to everyone he talks to.

91 — 110 Near Success: 80% • 1.5✱ • +10➡
Slim pickings today. The only person interested in your wares will only offer 75% of the normal price. He seems completely disinterested. You can try to find another buyer tomorrow, if you like.

111 — 175 Success: 100% • 1.0✱ • +20➡
Lots of customers today, you have several customers who will give you 100% of the normal price for the item. You probably should stock up.

176 up Absolute Success: 120% • 0.8✱ • +30➡
There is a large traffic jam in the streets that forces many customers to see your wares. Your smooth talking and excellent product results in two customers getting in a bidding war over your product. You end up getting 150% normal price!

General and GM-Assigned Modifers

Routine	+30
Easy	+20
Light	+10
Medium	+0
Hard	-10
Very Hard	-20
Extremely Hard	-30
Sheer Folly	-50
Absurd	-70

12.4 PURCHASE AND RESALE

When the PCs sell the goods they have acquired they may accumulate a large profit. This may be fine, but occasionally it will result in a game imbalance that defies mercantile sensibilities. Therefore, the GM may wish to employ the following guidelines governing the purchase and resale of goods.

In all cases below, it is presumed that the PCs are taking action. For example, when using the tables below, it is presumed that the PCs are purchasing or selling.

There are two major factors for the GM to consider when the PCs are buying goods: (1) is the object available and (2) what is the asking price.

When handling the selling of goods, there are also two factors to consider: (1) is there a buyer for the object and (2) what are they willing to pay for the object.

12.4.1 PURCHASING AN ITEM

Use the following procedure when the player characters are attempting to purchase an object (referred to as the commodity).

Determine the Market Supply

There are four different types of markets for a given commodity. An "oversupplied market" is an area where the commodity is overstocked or is produced in relatively large quantities (and then exported). A "supplied market" is an area where the commodity is normally stocked. This is typical of most cosmopolitan areas or well-stocked trading town. An "under supplied market" is one in which the commodity is occasionally found (but is probably not available at any given time). This is a typical market for imported goods. An "unsupplied market" is an area in which the commodity has either never been seen or is seen so rarely that most people have never seen it.

The type of market a character is in will determine which of the Commodity/Trading Tables to use. It is possible that a given locale will use different tables for different commodities. For example, in a given city, statuary is common and might use the Oversupplied Market Table; but glassware might be less common and use the Under supplied Market Table.

Determine the Transaction Location

There are four different types of locations in which the transaction can take place. When dealing with merchants in a regulated environment (i.e., any area where there might be local laws on buying and selling goods), the transaction should be classified as "Regulated Merchant." When dealing in a cosmopolitan area, but in a non-regulated way (i.e., in the local bazaar or just street vending), the transaction should be classified as "Street Merchant." When dealing with an individual in a non-cosmopolitan setting, the transaction should be classified as "Individual Transaction." When attempting to deal with the black market, the transaction should be classified as "Black Market."

The classifications of transaction locations are shown as different columns on the tables. It should be noted that most people prefer to deal with regulated merchants. The prices are not the best, but the risk is also less.

Check for Commodity Availability

Before availability can be determined, the commodity type must be determined. There are two different types of commodities: internal and external. An internal commodity is produced in the immediate locale (i.e., less than a day's travel from the transaction location). An external commodity is produced elsewhere and imported to the locale (i.e., is produced more than a day's travel from the transaction location).

On each column, of each table, the first entry is the chance that a given commodity will be available. Use the number to the left of the slash ("/") if the commodity is an internal commodity. Use the number to the right of the slash ("/") if the commodity is an external commodity. Roll d100 (not open-ended) and add the Availability# to the roll. If the result is over 100 (i.e., 101+), the commodity is currently available. If the roll is less than 100, the amount less than 100 should be an indicator of how long it will take (in days) to get the commodity. Of course, the GM can decide that the commodity will never be available (due to cultural limitations).

There are two modifiers to the availability check. If the commodity is produced nearby, a positive modifier could be given to the die roll. As a general guideline, commodities that are produced in an area that is about two week's travel away should have a modifier of zero. For each day closer that the commodity is produced, add +1 to the availability check. For each day further, a -1 modifier should be applied to the availability check.

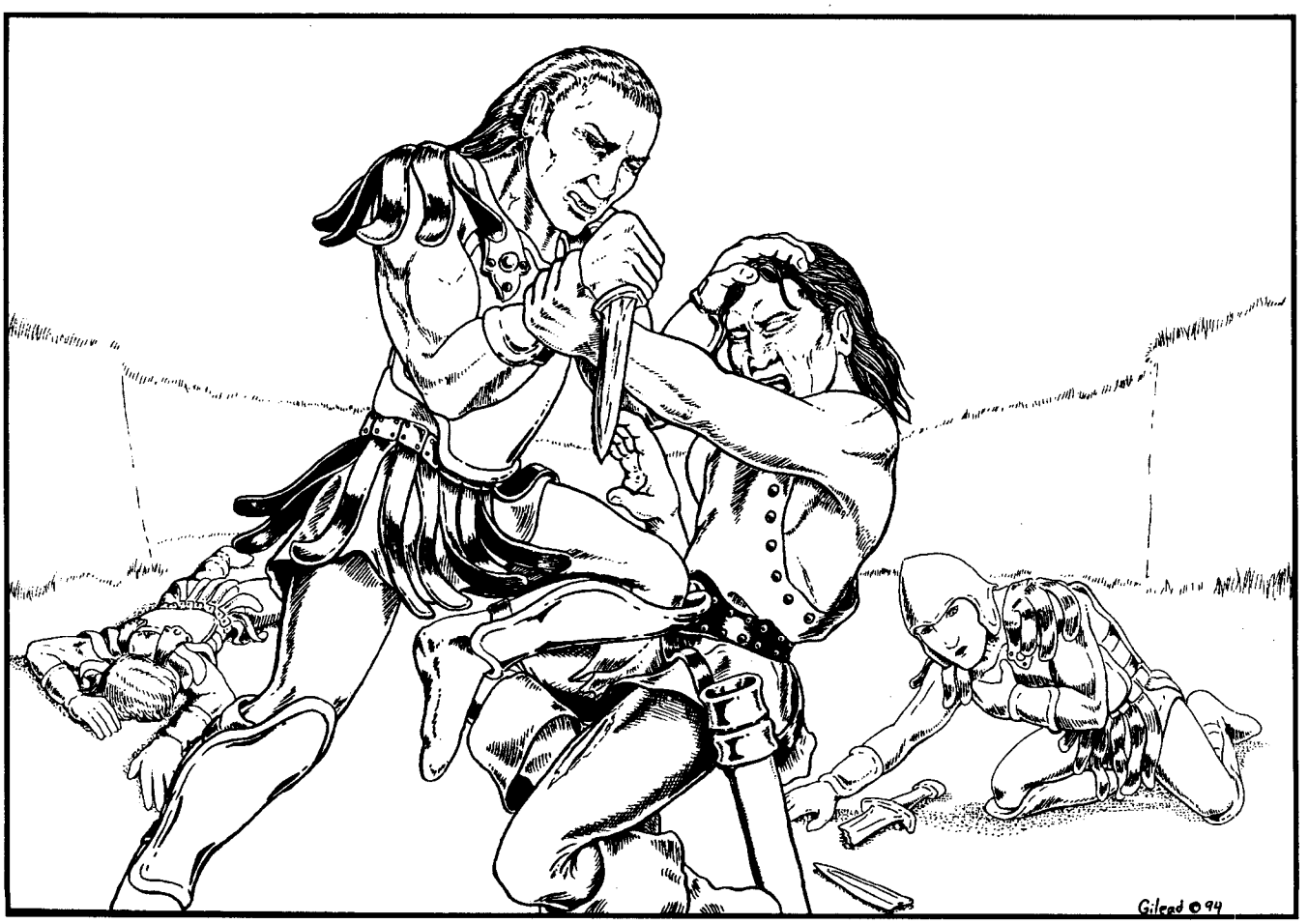
In addition, the distribution of the item will affect the availability. For example, if everyone in an area has glassware, it is more likely to be available (even if it is not locally produced). However, if statuary is owned only by the nobility, it is less likely to be available (even if it is locally produced). To represent the distribution of the commodity, the GM should assign a modifier ranging from +25 to -25.

Determine the Price of the Item

The last step is to determine the actual price of the item in question. There are two things that will affect the final asking price of the item: (1) the Trading skills of the people involved and (2) the utility of the commodity in question.

To determine the price of the item, the GM must roll a d100 (open-ended), adding the PCs Trading skill and subtracting the owner's Trading skill. In addition, there might be another modifier based upon the item's utility.

An item's utility can be classified in one of the following ways. An item of "locale affecting" utility would include items that can affect large areas in a broad and sweeping fashion (e.g., irrigation equipment). An item of "very useful" utility would include items that are affect only small groups of people, but are used quite frequently and are handy to have around (e.g., chandeliers). An item of "useful" utility would be used by many people, but only affect individuals at a time and not in a major fashion (e.g., silverware or china dishes). An item of "marginal" utility would rarely be used and then only by specific people (e.g., spectacles). An item of "oddity" utility would probably never be used by anyone in the area (e.g., a seaman's navigation chart sold in a land-locked village).



When indexing the value, read the value to the left of the slash ("/") as the percentage of "list" price the seller of the item is asking. The value to the right is used when the PCs are attempting to sell an item. If the result is not a number, the GM should examine the descriptions below to determine what has occurred.

Note: *If the player wishes to actually haggle with the GM (and the GM allows such things), allow him to do so. Depending on how well the player does, the GM can assign another +10 to -10 to the final die-roll.*

Using the Tables

Follow the procedures outlined above to determine the final asking price for the item in question. A player should be allowed to roll on a given column as many times as he likes. Each additional roll on the column has a -10 penalty (cumulative). GMs should decide whether to allow the PC to return back to a previous offer or make the PC roll again for a new price. It is suggested that the GM make all deals binding only as long as the PC remains in the shop (at the store, etc.). Once the PC leaves, he must "re-negotiate" the deal.

All modifiers to the all dice rolls are shown on the tables themselves.

Here is a list of the "non"-percentage results that can be generated on the tables and an explanation of them. Some results on the table are given an asterisk. This indicates that this result is applied before any modifiers are taken to the open-ended dice roll.

Swindle: The character has been swindled by the merchant (on purpose). The exact nature of the swindle should be adjusted according to the circumstances. For example, the merchant has passed off shoddy goods (and the character is not aware of it). Alternatively, the character might have sold the goods and received counterfeit money in exchange. The character should believe that he has just received an incredible bargain.

Theft: The character has been robbed! The exact nature of the theft should be adjusted to fit the circumstances. For example, the merchant might arrange to deliver the goods if the party pays now without the intent to deliver. Alternatively, the merchant might promise to deliver payment for goods without actually paying.

Note: *The biggest difference between a theft and a swindle is that when swindled, the character ends up with something that he doesn't want. A theft results only in the loss of the item(s) in question (usually through the promise of goods or services that never occurs).*

A-Theft: The character is a victim of an armed robbery. The exact nature of the theft should be adjusted to fit the circumstances. For example, the merchant was not a merchant at all, but a rogue out to steal the character's money. Alternatively, the merchant refuses to buy the character's goods and instead sends some thugs to steal them.

Note: *The biggest difference between an armed theft and a theft is that the character's life is put into peril as a result of an armed theft (while this is not usually true of a normal theft).*

Turned In: While trying to make a purchase or sale on the black market, the character is turned in to (or caught by) the authorities. The exact repercussions of this should be adjusted to fit the circumstances. For example, the character could be caught up in an elaborate "sting" operation (in an attempt to catch an established ring of thieves). At bare minimum, the net result should be treated as a "No Sale" result.

Report: While attempting to make a purchase or sale of the item, the individual spreads the word about the sale (and refuses to complete the transaction; treat as a "No Sale" result). The exact repercussions of this should be adjusted to the circumstances. For example, if the character has just purchased three weeks of rations, word might spread that the character is going to be leaving soon on a long journey. Alternatively, the individual might put out words of warning to further prohibit this character from making similar purchase or sale attempts in this vicinity.

No Sale: The character is unable to sell this item at this time. All further price rolls for selling this item in this vicinity will suffer a -10 penalty (cumulative with previous "No Sale" results).

12.4.2 SELLING AN ITEM

The procedure for selling an item remain the same as for purchasing an item, except it is the availability of a buyer that the characters check for and the final asking price is determined by looking at the number to the right of the slash ("/") in the table.

Purchase and Resale Tables

Note that the results to the left of the slash apply to purchases and the results to the right of the slash apply to resales (if there is only one result, it applies to both purchases and resales). Asterisked ("*") results indicate that the result applies before any modifiers are taken to the open-ended dice roll.

Price Roll Modifiers

awesome utility	-40 / +30
very useful utility	-20 / +10
useful utility	+0 / +0
marginal utility	+10 / -20
oddity utility	+30 / -40
haggling	+10 to -10
per previous "No Sale"	-10

Availability Modifiers

source distance	±distance in days
distribution	+25 to -25

OVERSUPPLIED MARKET

Avail #	90 / 65	80 / 55	60 / 35	70 / 45
Roll	Regulated Merchant	Street Merchant	Individual Transaction	Black Market
≤ -26	Swindle*	A-Theft*	Theft	A-Theft
-25 – 05	No Sale*	A-Theft	Swindle*	A-Theft*
06 – 10	No Sale*	Theft*	Swindle*	A-Theft
11 – 15	No Sale	Swindle*	Swindle	Theft*
16 – 20	No Sale / 5%	No Sale*	Swindle	Theft
21 – 25	150% / 5%	No Sale	No Sale*	Swindle*
26 – 30	100% / 5%	No Sale	Reported*	Swindle
31 – 35	85% / 5%	No Sale / 5%	No Sale*	Swindle
36 – 40	75% / 10%	No Sale / 5%	No Sale	No Sale*
41 – 45	70% / 10%	100% / 5%	No Sale	Turned In*
46 – 50	65% / 10%	85% / 10%	No Sale	No Sale*/Turned In
51 – 55	65% / 10%	75% / 10%	No Sale	No Sale / 10%
56 – 60	60% / 10%	60% / 10%	No Sale	No Sale / 15%
61 – 65	60% / 10%	55% / 10%	No Sale / 5%	No Sale / 15%
66 – 70	55% / 10%	55% / 15%	No Sale / 10%	200% / 20%
71 – 75	55% / 10%	50% / 15%	No Sale / 15%	150% / 20%
76 – 80	55% / 10%	50% / 15%	No Sale / 20%	100% / 25%
81 – 85	50% / 15%	45% / 15%	No Sale / 20%	85% / 30%
86 – 90	50% / 15%	45% / 20%	No Sale / 25%	75% / 35%
91 – 95	50% / 15%	45% / 20%	200% / 25%	60% / 45%
96 – 120	50% / 15%	45% / 20%	150% / 30%	55% / 50%
121 – 140	50% / 20%	40% / 25%	100% / 35%	50% / 60%
141 – 160	45% / 20%	35% / 30%	75% / 35%	50% / 75%
161 – 180	40% / 25%	30% / 35%	55% / 45%	45% / 85%
181 – 200	35% / 30%	25% / 50%	50% / 50%	40% / 100%
201+	30% / 35%	20% / 60%	45% / 75%	30% / 125%

SUPPLIED MARKET

Avail #	70 / 45	60 / 35	40 /15	50 / 25
Roll	Regulated Merchant	Street Merchant	Individual Transaction	Black Market
≤ -26	Swindle*	A-Theft*	Theft	A-Theft
-25 – 05	No Sale*	A-Theft	Swindle*	A-Theft*
06 – 10	No Sale* / 5%	Theft*	Swindle*	A-Theft
11 – 15	No Sale /10%	Swindle*	Swindle	Theft*
16 – 20	No Sale / 15%	No Sale*	Swindle	Theft
21 – 25	300% / 20%	No Sale	No Sale*	Swindle*
26 – 30	200% / 10%	No Sale	Reported*	Swindle
31 – 35	175% / 10%	No Sale / 10%	No Sale*	Swindle
36 – 40	150% / 15%	No Sale / 10%	No Sale	No Sale*
41 – 45	140% / 15%	200% / 15%	No Sale	Turned In*
46 – 50	130% / 15%	175% / 15%	No Sale	No Sale*/Turned In
51 – 55	130% / 15%	150% / 20%	No Sale	No Sale / 25%
56 – 60	120% / 20%	120% / 20%	No Sale	No Sale / 30%
61 – 65	120% / 20%	110% / 25%	No Sale / 10%	No Sale / 35%
66 – 70	110% / 20%	105% / 25%	No Sale / 20%	400% / 40%
71 – 75	110% / 25%	100% / 30%	No Sale / 30%	300% / 45%
76 – 80	110% / 25%	100% / 30%	No Sale / 40%	200% / 50%
81 – 85	105% / 25%	95% / 35%	No Sale / 45%	175% / 60%
86 – 90	105% / 30%	95% / 35%	No Sale / 50%	150% / 75%
91 – 95	105% / 30%	90% / 40%	400% / 55%	125% / 85%
96 – 120	100% / 35%	90% / 45%	300% / 65%	110% / 100%
121 – 140	100% / 35%	80% / 50%	200% / 70%	105% / 125%
141 – 160	90% / 40%	70% / 60%	150% / 75%	100% / 150%
161 – 180	80% / 50%	60% / 75%	110% / 85%	90% / 175%
181 – 200	70% / 60%	50% / 100%	100% / 100%	80% / 200%
201+	60% / 75%	40% / 125%	90% / 150%	60% / 250%

UNDER SUPPLIED MARKET

Avail #	50 / 25	40 / 15	20 / -5	30 / 5
Roll	Regulated Merchant	Street Merchant	Individual Transaction	Black Market
≤ -26	Swindle*	A-Theft*	Theft	A-Theft
-25 – 05	No Sale*	A-Theft	Swindle*	A-Theft*
06 – 10	No Sale* / 5%	Theft*	Swindle*	A-Theft
11 – 15	No Sale /10%	Swindle*	Swindle	Theft*
16 – 20	No Sale / 15%	No Sale*	Swindle	Theft
21 – 25	600% / 20%	No Sale	No Sale*	Swindle*
26 – 30	400% / 25%	No Sale	Reported*	Swindle
31 – 35	350% / 25%	No Sale / 20%	No Sale*	Swindle
36 – 40	300% / 30%	No Sale / 25%	No Sale	No Sale*
41 – 45	280% / 30%	400% / 30%	No Sale	Turned In*
46 – 50	260% / 35%	350% / 35%	No Sale	No Sale*/Turned In
51 – 55	250% / 35%	300% / 40%	No Sale	No Sale / 50%
56 – 60	240% / 40%	250% / 45%	No Sale	No Sale / 60%
61 – 65	230% / 40%	225% / 50%	No Sale / 20%	No Sale / 70%
66 – 70	225% / 45%	210% / 55%	No Sale / 40%	800% / 80%
71 – 75	220% / 50%	200% / 60%	No Sale / 60%	600% / 90%
76 – 80	220% / 50%	200% / 65%	No Sale / 80%	400% / 100%
81 – 85	210% / 55%	190% / 70%	No Sale / 90%	350% / 125%
86 – 90	210% / 60%	190% / 75%	No Sale / 100%	300% / 150%
91 – 95	200% / 60%	180% / 80%	800% / 110%	250% / 175%
96 – 120	200% / 70%	180% / 90%	600% / 130%	225% / 200%
121 – 140	190% / 75%	160% / 100%	500% / 140%	210% / 250%
141 – 160	180% / 85%	140% / 125%	400% / 150%	200% / 300%
161 – 180	160% / 100%	120% / 150%	300% / 175%	180% / 350%
181 – 200	140% / 120%	100% / 200%	200% / 200%	160% / 400%
201+	120% / 150%	80% / 250%	150% / 300%	150% / 500%

UNSUPPLIED MARKET

Avail #	30 / 5	20 / -5	0 / -25	10 / -15
Roll	Regulated Merchant	Street Merchant	Individual Transaction	Black Market
≤ -26	Swindle*	A-Theft*	Theft	A-Theft
-25 – 05	No Sale*	A-Theft	Swindle*	A-Theft*
06 – 10	No Sale* / 10%	Theft*	Swindle*	A-Theft
11 – 15	No Sale /20%	Swindle*	Swindle	Theft*
16 – 20	No Sale / 30%	No Sale*	Swindle	Theft
21 – 25	1000% / 40%	No Sale	No Sale*	Swindle*
26 – 30	800% / 50%	No Sale	Reported*	Swindle
31 – 35	700% / 55%	No Sale / 40%	No Sale*	Swindle
36 – 40	600% / 60%	No Sale / 50%	No Sale	No Sale*
41 – 45	550% / 65%	800% / 60%	No Sale	Turned In*
46 – 50	525% / 70%	700% / 70%	No Sale	No Sale*/Turned In
51 – 55	500% / 75%	600% / 80%	No Sale	No Sale / 100%
56 – 60	475% / 80%	500% / 90%	No Sale	No Sale / 125%
61 – 65	450% / 80%	450% / 100%	No Sale / 40%	No Sale / 150%
66 – 70	450% / 90%	425% / 110%	No Sale / 80%	1500% / 150%
71 – 75	450% / 100%	400% / 120%	No Sale / 100%	1000% / 175%
76 – 80	450% / 100%	400% / 130%	No Sale / 150%	800% / 200%
81 – 85	425% / 110%	375% / 140%	No Sale / 175%	700% / 250%
86 – 90	425% / 120%	375% / 150%	No Sale / 200%	600% / 300%
91 – 95	400% / 125%	350% / 160%	1500% / 225%	500% / 350%
96 – 120	400% / 140%	325% / 180%	1250% / 250%	550% / 400%
121 – 140	375% / 150%	300% / 200%	1000% / 275%	425% / 500%
141 – 160	375% / 175%	275% / 250%	800% / 300%	400% / 600%
161 – 180	350% / 200%	250% / 300%	600% / 350%	375% / 700%
181 – 200	300% / 250%	200% / 400%	400% / 400%	350% / 800%
201+	250% / 300%	175% / 500%	300% / 600%	300% / 1000%

EQUIPMENT LISTS

On the following pages are lists of standard equipment. Along with each list are a number of other factors. The first item is a unique identifier. The sections below describe the other factors found on each list.

13.1 NOTES ON THE LISTS

Accessories

This is a list of common items that adventuring characters often need. The price given is based upon the locale of the character (some things are cheaper in villages than in cities, and vice-versa). Also shown are the average weight and the average construction time. The other notes section details any special notes for the item (including what the item is made of when it is not obvious).

Armor

This is a list of the various types of armor generally found in a medieval/fantasy setting. Listed with each piece of armor is the Rolemaster Armor Type (AT) that is associated with the armor. Also shown is the standard price for the armor (this does not usually vary from locale to locale), how long the armor takes to make, and how much the standard piece of armor weighs. The notes section also gives further description to the armor.

Food and Lodging

This is a list of standard food and lodging services found in a medieval/fantasy setting. GMs should use the list of food items only as a guideline, as each gaming world is slightly different (e.g., beer is only found in Country A while mead is only found in Country B). Along with the prices (which vary from locale to locale) are shown other notes about the item (including the standard serving size or duration of service).

Transport

This list shows the different types of transport generally available in a game world. There are two types of transport: an item (or animal) that is purchased by the character (e.g., a riding horse or a wagon) and a service that is used by a character for a short duration (a ferry or coach passage).

Purchased transports are given a price that varies based upon the locale of the character. In addition, a movement rate for the item is given (in both feet per round and miles per hour). There is also a standard manuever bonus given (as some types of transport are easier to control). Also shown is the standard size (height and weight) for the transport. In addition, the standard carrying capacity (in pounds) is shown. Finally, if the transport is capable of fighting, a standard Offensive Bonus (OB) is given.

For temporary transport, the price shown has a "per mile" addition. This reflects that the further you travel, the more you pay. The movement rates for the transport are also given. If any other statistics are needed, use a comparable "purchased" transport to determine them.

Weapons

This list shows all of the weapons that are typically available in a medieval/fantasy world. In addition to the price (which does not usually vary from locale to locale), the weapon category is shown. Also shown is the average time it takes to make the item and how much the average item weighs. Finally, some figures are given for typical breakage numbers, strengths, and fumble ranges (see Arms Law or the Rolemaster Standard Rules for more on how to use these numbers).

Herbs, Breads, Intoxicants, and Poisons

The last list is actually four lists showing samples of enchanted herbs (and herbs with special healing properties), breads with enchanted effects, intoxicants of various types, and a variety of poisons.

The herb list, breads list, and intoxicant lists will contain the form and preparation method of the item. In addition, the codes showing the climate and locale are shown (along with a difficulty modifier). Also, the Addiction Factor (AF) is shown (see the notes under Diseases and Poison for rules on how to handle addictions). Finally, the suggested affect for the herb is shown. The notes before the list show further details on each of these factors. These same codes are used for intoxicants.

The poison lists show a "level" that indicates the lethality of the poison. The level is given a letter code that may be used for level variability (see *C&M* for complete rules on how to use level variability).

Finding Herbs in the Wild

When searching for herbs in the wild, the first factor that must be met is that the climate and locale must be suitable for the herb to grow. If these two conditions are met, the difficulty modifier is applied to a character's foraging roll.

There are a few other modifiers to the foraging roll. The list below shows some typical modifiers.

Area has been foraged in the last 6 months	-50
For a successful Herb Lore skill check	+25
Each additional searcher	+2
Each 10 hours spent unsuccessfully searching	+5

There are a few other restrictions. The first is that it is assumed that it takes 10 hours to search the locale to find the herb (in an unfamiliar territory). The number of doses found with each foraging roll can be determined by subtracting 100 from the total roll and dividing the result by 10 (dropping fractions). To this number, add d10. The final result is the number of doses found.

The last point that a GM must consider is the size of the area that is searched. The general assumption is that a character can search about an acre of rolling, lightly forested hills, in 10 hours. The GM will want to vary the exact size of the area covered, but 10 hours is the suggested time limit.

ACCESSORY LIST

ID#	Item	Cost Rural	Cost Town	Cost City	Weight	Prod. Time	Other Notes
001	Arrows (20)	5 bp	4 bp	28 cp	3 lbs.	1 day	Wooden shafts, goose feathers, and iron tips.
002	Backpack	22 cp	2 bp	22 cp	2-3 lbs.	1 day	Leather or canvas with wooden buckles. Holds 20 lbs. (1 cu').
003	Bedroll (light)	19 cp	2 bp	23 cp	4-7 lbs.	0.5 day	Wool blanket and mat. Good for 2 seasons.
004	Bedroll (heavy)	6 bp	7 bp	8 bp	8-11 lbs	1 day	Wool and fur blankets and mat. Good for 4 seasons.
005	Boots	12 bp	1 sp	1sp	3-4 lbs.	3 day	Leather with laces.
006	Brush (writing)	6 cp	5 cp	3 cp	0.25 lbs.	4 hrs	Wooden shaft (4") with hair bristles. Leather cap for bristles.
007	Bucket	5 bp	4 bp	42 cp	2-3 lbs.	1 day	Copper (with wooden handle). Holds 3 gallons.
008	Caltrops (5)	9 bp	8 bp	7 bp	2 lbs.	1 day	Made of iron. Portable spike trap (each caltrop has 2" diameter).
009	Candle	4 cp	4 cp	3 cp	0.25 lbs.	0.5 day	Wax or tallow. Lights d10' diameter. Burnsapproximately 2 hours.
010	Case	3 sp	4sp	3 sp	1 lb.	2 days	Water-resistant. Leather with leather straps. 12" x 3" x 6".
011	Cask	2 sp	24 bp	22 bp	5 lbs.	1.5 days	Wooden (with iron strapping). Holds up to 4 gallons.
012	Chain	7 bp	6 bp	5 bp	8-10 lbs	1 day	Iron links (3" diameter). 10' long length.
013	Chalk (10)	26 cp	2 bp	24 cp	0.25 lbs.	2 hrs	White drawing tools. 5" long sticks.
014	Charcoal	25 cp	22 cp	27 cp	1 lb.	0.5 day	Creates a hot fire. Brick burns for 4 hours.
015	Chisel	1 sp	9 bp	8 bp	1 lb.	1 day	Iron tool (+5 to carving maneuvers). Attacks as -40 dagger.
016	Cloak	7 bp	9 bp	10 bp	2-3 lbs.	1 day	Heavy linen or wool with tie clasp.
017	Climbing pick	3 sp	28 bp	25 bp	2 lbs.	1 day	Iron tool (+5 to climbing maneuvers). Attacks as -15 war mattock.
018	Coat	13 bp	15 bp	17 bp	5-9 lbs.	2 days	Leather or heavy linen (with buttons or wooden fasteners).
019	Crossbow bolts (20)	15 bp	11 bp	9 bp	3 lbs.	2 days	Wooden shafts, goose feather fletching, and iron tips.
020	Fire-starting bow	6 tp	8 tp	9 tp	0.5 lbs.	1 hr	Simple fire-starting tool. Starts fire in 5 minutes.
021	Flint and steel	11 cp	1 bp	9 cp	0.5 lbs.	—	Simple fire-starting tool. Starts fire in 3 minutes.
022	Framepack	3 bp	33 cp	4 bp	3-4 lbs.	1.5 days	Wood, canvas, leather with wooden buckles. Holds 45 lbs. (2 cu').
023	Gloves	15 cp	2 bp	2 bp	0.5 lbs.	1 day	Heavy leather. Lined with fur or linen.
024	Grappling hook	12 bp	1 sp	9 bp	1 lb.	1 day	Iron tool (+10 to climbing maneuvers – grip fails on a 02-03).
025	Hammer	13 bp	1 sp	9 bp	1 lb.	1 day	Iron tool. Attacks as a -30 mace (use mace breakage).
026	Hammock	12 cp	1 bp	13 cp	2-3 lbs.	3 days	Rope with wood spreaders and iron hooks.
027	Harness	9 bp	1 sp	9 bp	4 lbs.	2 days	Leather with iron fittings. Includes bit and reins.
028	Hat	5 bp	6 bp	5 bp	1 lb.	1 day	Leather head covering.
029	Hood	11 cp	16 cp	18 cp	0.5 lbs.	0.5 day	Linen covering for head and shoulders.
030	Ink	2 bp	14 cp	1 bp	0.25 lbs.	—	Black, 2 ounces. Non-soluble.
031	Ladder	33 cp	3 bp	31 cp	15 lbs.	2 days	Wooden (10' long). Bears up to 400 lbs.
032	Lantern	14 bp	12 bp	10 bp	1-2 lbs.	4 days	Made of copper and glass (wooden handle). Lights 4d10' diameter.
033	Lock pick kit	2 sp	1 sp	8 bp	0.5 lbs.	2 days	Contains 2d10 tools (various construction). +5 skill bonus.
034	Mirror	4 sp	35 bp	37 bp	0.5 lbs.	1 day	Silvered glass (6"x4").
035	Nails (20)	1 cp	9 tp	8 tp	0.5 lbs.	3 hrs	Iron (3" long). BF = 1, Reliability = 95.
036	Oar	5 cp	6 cp	7 cp	4-5 lbs.	7 hrs	Wooden (6'-8' long). BF = 1, Reliability = 85.
037	Oil flask	4 bp	3 bp	3 bp	1 lb.	1 day	Includes 1 pint oil (burns for 6 hours in a lantern).
038	Padded Undercoat	55 cp	6 bp	65 cp	2-4 lbs.	2 days	Heavy linen or wool (generall worn under armor). Gives AT 2.
039	Paddle	4 cp	5 cp	6 cp	3 lbs.	5 hrs	Wooden (4'-5'). BF = 3, Reliability = 80.
040	Padlock	3 sp	23 bp	21 bp	1 lb.	2 days	Iron locking device. Comes with 2 keys.
041	Pants	2 bp	25 cp	27 cp	1-2 lbs.	1 day	Linen with a draw string at the waist.
042	Paper (10)	16 bp	12 bp	9 bp	0.25 lbs.	1 day	Loose sheets (12"x6").
043	Parchment (10)	28 bp	2 sp	13 bp	0.25 lbs.	1 day	Loose sheets. 12"x6". Very durable.
044	Pegs (10)	8 tp	9 tp	1 cp	2 lbs.	2 hrs	Wooden climbing assistance (+5). BF = 4, Reliability = 75.
045	Pitons (10)	22 cp	2 bp	18 cp	2-3 lbs.	1 day	Iron climbing assistance (+5). BF = 2, Reliability = 85.
046	Plank	5 tp	6 tp	7 tp	11-12 lb.	4 hrs	Wooden (10'x6"x2"). Bears up to 350 lbs.
047	Pole	4 cp	5 cp	6 cp	5-10 lbs.	3 hrs	Wooden (10' x 2" diameter). BF = 3, Reliability = 70.
048	Pot (cooking)	8 bp	7 bp	8 bp	2-3 lbs.	1 day	Iron. Holds 2 gallons. Attacks as a -40 mace.
049	Quill-pens (10)	5 cp	4 cp	3 cp	0.25 lbs.	2 hrs	Goose feathers.
050	Quiver	1 bp	1 bp	15 cp	0.5 lbs.	1 day	Leather/wood. Holds 20 arrows/bolts. Has shoulder sling.
051	Rope	5 bp	4 bp	3 bp	4-7 lbs.	3 days	Hemp (50' length, 1" diameter).
052	Rope (superior)	15 bp	12 bp	9 bp	2-4 lbs.	5 days	Hemp, reinforced with heavy cord (50' length, 1.5" diameter).
053	Sack (50 lb)	7 cp	8 cp	8 cp	2-3 lbs.	2 hrs	Canvas (holds 50 lbs. and/or 3 cubic feet).
054	Saddle	6 sp	5 sp	6 sp	10-12 lb.	6 days	Leather, wood, iron. Includes stirrups and a saddle blanket.
055	Saddle bag	9 bp	8 bp	9 bp	4-6 lbs.	2 days	Leather with wood/metal fittings (holds 15 lbs., 1.5 cubic feet).
056	Saw	2 sp	23 bp	25 bp	2-3 lbs.	2 days	Iron blade (24"), wooden handle. Wood cutting tool.
057	Scabbard (belt)	30 bp	25 bp	28 bp	1 lb.	1 day	Leather with metal fittings. Holds one 1-handed weapon.
058	Scabbard (shoulder)	37 bp	3 sp	33 bp	1.5 lbs.	1 day	Leather with metal fittings. Holds one 2-handed weapon.
059	Shirt	25 cp	3 bp	3 bp	1 lb.	1.5 days	Linen.
060	Spade	2 sp	16 bp	17 bp	3-4 lbs.	1 day	Iron blade/wooden shaft. Digging tool.
061	Sundial	5 sp	3 sp	2 sp	1 lb.	2 days	Iron. Gives approximate time (on sunny days).
062	Surcoat	8 bp	9 bp	10 bp	1-2 lbs.	1.5 days	Loose linen outer garment.
063	Tarp	12 cp	1 bp	11 cp	3-5 lbs.	2 hrs	Canvas (5' x 8').
064	Tent	25 bp	2 sp	23 bp	8-10 lbs.	2 days	Canvas with metal fittings (5' x 8'; has poles). Two man.
065	Tinderbox	2 cp	2 cp	2 cp	0.25 lbs.	0.5 day	Wooden box filled with tender (enough for 7 fires).
066	Torch	3 tp	3 tp	3 tp	1 lb.	1 hr	Wooden brand, one end pitch-coated. Lights 20' diameter (6 hrs).
067	Vial	24 cp	2 bp	12 cp	0.25 lbs.	2 hrs	Glass with glass stopper. Holds 2 ounces.
068	Waterskin	8 tp	1 cp	9 tp	0.25 lbs.	6 hrs	Leather patchwork. Holds 1 pint (approximately 0.5 lbs).
069	Weapon belt	6 bp	5 bp	6 bp	1 lb.	0.5 day	Leather with metal fittings. Holds 2 scabbards and/or 3 pouches.
070	Wedge (staying)	1 cp	1 cp	1 cp	1 lb.	1 hr	Hardwood, triangular wedge of wood. Great as a door stop.
071	Wedge (splitting)	3 cp	3 cp	32 tp	3 lbs.	2 hrs	Heavy iron wedge used in log-splitting.
072	Wire (10 gauge)	1 sp	9 bp	8 bp	3 lbs.	5 hrs	Spool of 100' of iron wire.
073	Whistle	25 bp	2 sp	26 bp	0.5 lb.	1 day	About 4" long, made of wood and/or iron.

ARMOR LIST

ID#	Item	AT	Cost	Prod. Time	Weight	Note
101	Leather Jerkin	5	1 sp	1 day	7-12 lbs.	Vest which covers abdomen.
102	Arm Greaves	*	1 sp	2 days	2-3 lbs.	Protects vs. critical hits on the arms.
103	Leg Greaves	*	1 sp	2 days	3-4 lbs.	Protects vs. critical hits on the legs.
104	Leather Coat	6	6 sp	6 days	15-20 lbs.	Protects most of legs.
105	Reinforced Leather Coat	7	9 sp	2 weeks	17-25 lbs.	Protects most of legs.
106	Reinf. Full-length Leather Coat	8	11 sp	16 days	19-30 lbs.	Protects legs and arms.
107	Leather Breastplate	9	45 bp	4 days	10-18 lbs.	Rigid vest which covers abdomen.
108	Chain Shirt	13	15 sp	3 weeks	15-25 lbs.	Covers abdomen and half upper arms.
109	Full Chain	15	65 sp	2 months	35-50 lbs.	Long-sleeved shirt and leggings.
110	Chain Hauberk	16	55 sp	35 days	35-40 lbs.	Long coat that covers arms and legs.
111	Breastplate	17	20 sp	21 days	20-30 lbs.	2 piece, metal vest. Covers abdomen.
112	Half Plate	19	100 sp	10 weeks	50-70 lbs.	Plate and chain. Covers whole body.
113	Full Plate*	20	200 sp	4 months	60-85 lbs.	Plate covering all exposed areas.
114	Target Shield	—	35 bp	3 days	3-10 lbs.	+20 DB vs. melee; +10 DB vs. missile.
115	Normal Shield	—	55 bp	5 days	10-20 lbs.	+20 DB vs. melee or missile.
116	Full Shield	—	7 sp	6 days	15-30 lbs.	+25 DB vs. melee or missile.
117	Wall Shield	—	9 sp	7 days	30-50 lbs.	+30 DB vs. melee; +40 DB vs. missile.
118	Leather Helmet	—	15 bp	1 day	1-2 lbs.	Padded skullcap.
119	Superior Leather Helm	—	25 bp	1.5 days	1.5-2.5 lbs.	Reinforced metal and leather.
120	Plate Helm	—	35 bp	1 days	1.5-3 lbs.	Interlocking, overlapping plates.
121	Pot Helm	—	4 sp	3 days	1.5-3 lbs.	Reinforced metal skullcap.
122	Full Helm	—	9 sp	8 days	2.5-5 lbs.	Covers neck and face; has vent slits.
123	Visored Helm	—	125 bp	10 days	2-5 lbs.	Covers neck; movable face covering.
124	Aventail	—	3 sp	5 days	1 lb.	Chain neck armor; attaches to helm.
125	Leather Barding	7	35 sp	2 weeks	100 lbs.	Covers horse's trunk. -15 to maneuv.
126	Chain Barding	16	150 sp	40 days	160 lbs.	Covers horse's trunk. -20 to maneuv.
127	Plate Barding	19	300 sp	4 months	190 lbs.	Covers horse's trunk. -30 to maneuv.
128	Leather Chanfron	—	6 sp	1 week	15 lbs.	Covers horse's head. Treat as helm.
129	Plate Chanfron	—	9 sp	9 days	25 lbs.	Covers horse's head. Treat as helm.
130	Leather Crinet	—	5 sp	6 days	25 lbs.	Covers horse's neck. -5 to maneuv.
131	Chain Crinet	—	27 sp	10 days	31 lbs.	Covers horse's neck. -5 to maneuv.
132	Plate Crinet	—	60 sp	20 days	38 lbs.	Covers horse's neck. -5 to maneuv.
133	Leather Bracer	—	1 sp	1 day	0.5 lbs.	Wrist-guard. 25% greave prot.
134	Plate Bracer	—	2 sp	2 days	0.75 lbs.	Wrist-guard. 50% greave prot.
135	Metal Gauntlet	—	2 sp	4 days	0.5 lbs.	+5 Martial Arts-Degree 1 OB

* Helm of choice included in price.

Note: *Armor types 3, 4, 11, and 12 are animal armors, natural body coverings with no normal armor equivalents. One cannot achieve such an AT without acquiring some enchanted and specially designed armor (e.g., magic fell beast skin). ATs 10, 14, and 18 are achieved by using the appropriate base armor (9, 13, and 17, respectively) with greaves.*

FOOD, LODGING, AND SERVICES LIST

ID#	Good/Service	Cost: Rural	Cost: Town	Cost: City	Note
301	Beer/ale	2 tp	2 tp	2 tp	Pint.
302	Brandy	12 tp	1 cp	15 tp	Half-pint.
303	Cider	1 tp	1 tp	2 tp	Pint.
304	Mead	5 tp	5 tp	6 tp	Pint.
305	Wine	5 tp	6 tp	7 tp	Pint.
306	Light meal	3 tp	6 tp	1 cp	3% chance of illness*.
307	Normal meal	5 tp	1 cp	2 cp	2% chance of illness*.
308	Heavy meal	6 tp	12 tp	24 tp	1% chance of illness*.
309	Week's rations	3 cp	5 cp	8 cp	Normal spoilage. 18 lbs.
310	Trail rations	5 cp	1 bp	2 bp	1 week. Preserved. 14 lbs.
311	Greatbread	2 gp	3 gp	35 sp	1 week. Preserved. 4 lbs.
312	Waybread	10 gp	15 gp	20 gp	1 month. Preserved. 4 lbs.
313	Poor lodging	6 tp	1 cp	14 tp	Per night. Communal sleeping.
314	Average lodging	1 cp	2 cp	24 tp	Per night. Separate bedding.
315	Good lodging	14 tp	22 tp	3 cp	Per night. Separate room.
316	Stable	1 tp	2 tp	3 tp	Per day. Includes food for beast.
317	Hospitalization	—	6 cp	9 cp	2x heal rate. Bedding, food, care. The price is usually a fee in the form of a contribution.
318	Library Access	—	—	1 sp	4 hour visit. No withdrawals.
319	Public Bath	—	5 tp	7 tp	1% chance of disease. Gender separation.
320	Private Bath	5 tp	1 cp	15 tp	0% chance of disease. Must pay extra for oils and perfumes.
321	Scribe	5 tp	1 cp	15 tp	Per page of simple text copied.
322	Crier/Herald	3 tp	6 tp	9 tp	Per announcement. Announced once per hour for 4 hours.
323	Legal Services	—	2 sp	4 sp	Per legal appearance (approximately 3 hours of work).
324	Laundry	2 tp	4 tp	6 tp	Per laundry load (simple laundry care).
325	Leather care	7 tp	6 tp	5 tp	Per item to be handled (includes simple repairs and cleaning).
326	Metal care	14 tp	12 tp	10 tp	Per item to be handled (includes simple repairs and cleaning).
327	Personal grooming	2 cp	4 cp	6 cp	Per visit (approximately 1 hour).
328	Research	5 bp	1 sp	15 bp	Per simple topic.

* This risk may be increased or reduced by circumstance, or by prudent instructions, additional payment, etc.

TRANSPORT LIST

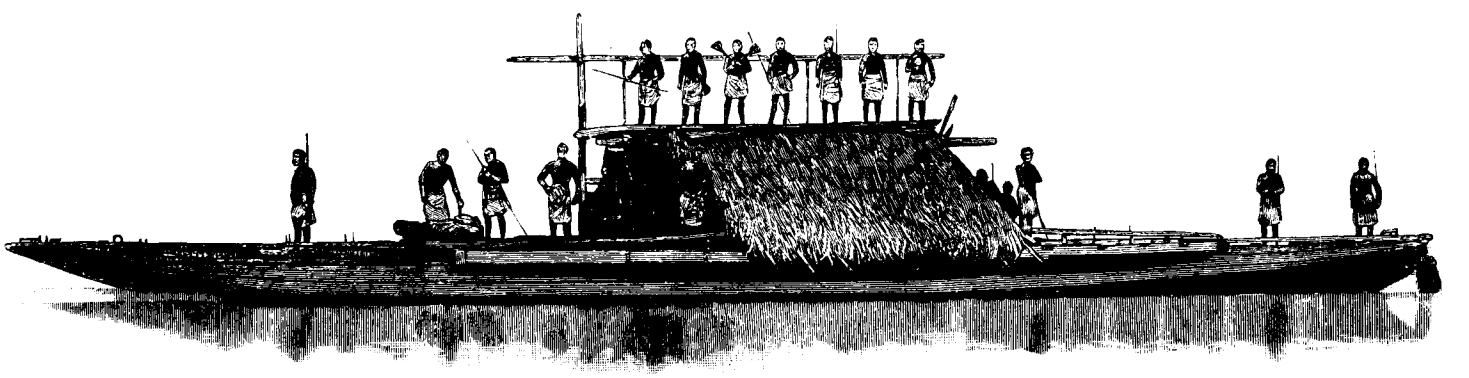
ID#	Item	Cost Rural	Cost Town	Cost City	ft/rnd	mi/hr	Max Pace	Man.	Ht/Wt*	Capacity	OB
401	Camel (draft)	15 gp	12 gp	14 gp	60	4	Spt	+10	7' / 900	350 lbs.	—
402	Camel (racing)	35 gp	40 gp	45 gp	90	6	FSpt	+20	7' / 750	200 lbs.	—
403	Elephant	65 gp	50 gp	75 gp	120	8	Spt	+10	12' / 11,000	1,000 lbs.	—
404	Horse (light)	35 sp	45 sp	6 gp	100	7	Dash	+40	5' / 800	200 lbs.	+5
405	Horse (medium)	45 sp	6 gp	75 sp	110	7.5	Dash	+25	6' / 900	300 lbs.	+5
406	Horse (heavy)	7 gp	8 gp	9 gp	80	5	FSpt	+10	6'+ / 1,300	400 lbs.	+5
407	Llama/alpaca	8 gp	7 gp	8 gp	100	7	FSpt	+30	4' / 200	50 lbs.	—
408	Mule/donkey	25 sp	32 sp	47 sp	90	6	Dash	+20	4'+ / 550	250 lbs.	—
409	Ox	85 sp	95 sp	105 sp	60	4	FSpt	+20	5' / 2,000	700 lbs.	—
410	Pony (mature)	20 sp	40 sp	55 sp	70	4.5	Dash	+30	4' / 500	180 lbs.	—
411	Sled dog	1 gp	13 sp	2 gp	110	7.5	Dash	+20	2.5' / 85	40 lbs.	—
412	Warhorse (lesser)	15 gp	20 gp	30 gp	90	6	Dash	+30	6' / 950	350 lbs.	+20
413	Warhorse (greater)	75 gp†	75 gp†	75 gp	80	5	Dash	+40	6'+ / 1,100	375 lbs.	+30
414	Boat (small)	4 gp	7 gp	9 gp	30‡	2.5‡	Run	—	10' / 200	1,000 lbs.	—
415	Boat (medium)	8 gp	11 gp	14 gp	40‡	3‡	sail	—	20' / 800	4,000 lbs.	—
416	Boat (large)	25 gp	40 gp	55 gp	30‡	2.5‡	sail	—	30' / 2,000	7,000 lbs.	—
417	Canoe	7 gp	8 gp	10 gp	50‡	3.5	Spt	—	15' / 130	700 lbs.	—
418	Chariot (war)	12 gp	16 gp	16 gp	90	6	+20	15' / 400	400 lbs.	+25	
419	Coracle	7 sp	8 sp	—	30‡	2.5‡	Spt	—	7' / 140	700 lbs.	—
420	Dog-sled	6 gp	7 gp	9 gp	90	6	Dash	-10	11'+ / 350	450 lbs.	—
421	Hand-cart	9 sp	11 sp	14 sp	40	3	Spt	-70	4.5' / 100	250 lbs.	—
422	Horse-cart (open)	3 gp	4 gp	5 gp	50	3.5	Spt	-25	6' / 450	800 lbs.	—
423	Ship (small)	65 gp	80 gp	95 gp	40‡	3‡	sail	—	45' / 6,000	19,000 lbs.	—
424	Ship (medium)	150 gp	190 gp	210 gp	30‡	2.5‡	sail	—	60' / 12,000	35,000 lbs.	—
425	Ship (large)	—	650 gp	720 gp	30‡	2.5‡	sail	—	80' / 20,000	55,000 lbs.	—
426	Skis	6 cp	7 cp	8 cp	90	6	Dash	-10	6' / 15	300 lbs.	—
427	Sledge (covered)	1 sp	12 cp	15 cp	70	4.5	FSpt	-20	10' / 100	400 lbs.	—
428	Wagon (open)	5 gp	6 gp	7 gp	50	3.5	FSpt	-30	8' / 600	1,200 lbs.	—
429	Wagon (closed)	8 gp	9 gp	10 gp	40	3	FSpt	-40	9' / 850	1,300 lbs.	—
430	Coach service	1 bp+1 cp/mi	1 bp+1 cp/mi	1 bp+1 cp/mi	60	4	FSpt	—	—	—	—
431	Ferry service	1 bp+2 cp/mi	1 bp+2 cp/mi	1 bp+2 cp/mi	30	2.5	Run	—	—	—	—
432	Ship passage	5 bp+2 tp/mi	5 bp+2 tp/mi	5 bp+2 tp/mi	30‡	2.5‡	sail	—	—	—	—
433	Toll charge	1 cp	1 cp	1 cp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

* Height is at shoulder level. Size reflects low to average.

† Rarely available unless purchased from lord or wealthy dealer.

‡ Speed in dead water. Add or subtract the affect of currents and winds.

Notes: Ships are vessels capable of negotiating open seas, while boats are adapted to relatively shallow waters: coastal channels, lakes, rivers, etc.



WEAPON LIST

ID#	Item	Cost	Type	Prod. Time	Weight	B#s	Str.	Fumble
500 [ax]	Axe	2 sp	1he	1 day	4-6 lbs.	1-7	56-64(w)	01-04
501 [bd]	Bastard Sword	20 sp	1he/2h	45 days	4-6 lbs.	1-4/1-5	68-82	01-04/01-05
502 [ba]	Battle Axe	13 sp	2h	2 days	5-9 lbs.	1-8	65-75(w)	01-05
503 [bj]	Blackjack	2 cp	1hc	6 hours	0.5 lbs.	1-8	47-53(s)	01
504 [bp]	Blowpipe	12 sp	mis	1 day	2-4 lbs.	—	—	01-05
505 [br]	Boar Spear	25 bp	pa	1 day	3-6 lbs.	1-5	47-53(w)	01-05
506 [bo]	Bola (2 handed)	5 sp	th	1 day	2-6 lbs.	1-6	47-53(s)	01-07
507 [bm]	Boomerang	2 sp	th	12 hours	0.5 lbs.	1-7	47-53(w)	01-04
508 [bs]	Broadsword	10 sp	1he	3 days	3-5 lbs.	1-7	75-86	01-03
509 [ca]	Cat-o'-nine tails	1 sp	1hc/1he	1 day	3-5 lbs.	1-4	56-64(s)	01-07
510 [cm]	Claymore	20 sp	1he	3 days	5-10 lbs.	1-8	68-82	01-04
511 [cl]	Club	1 cp	1hc	6 hours	3-7 lbs.	1-8	46-54(w)	01-04
512 [cb]	Composite Bow	17 sp	mis	14 days	2-3 lbs.	—	—	01-04
513 [xh]	Crossbow, Heavy	25 sp	mis	16 days	8-12 lbs.	—	—	01-05
515 [xl]	Crossbow, Light	11 sp	mis	7 days	4-8 lbs.	—	—	01-05
515 [cd]	Cudgel	5 cp	1hc/2h	12 hours	2-4 lbs.	1-8	47-53(w)	01-03
516 [cu]	Cutlass	9 sp	1he	2 days	3-5 lbs.	1-6	73-87	01-03
517 [da]	Dagger	3 sp	1he/th	1 day	0.75 lbs.	1-6	74-86	01
518 [dt]	Dart	1 sp	th	6 hours	0.5-1 lbs.	1-6	38-42(w)	01-05
519 [di]	Dirk	4 sp	1he	1 day	0.75 lbs.	1-6	73-87	01
520 [fa]	Falchion	15 sp	1he	3 days	3.5-5 lbs.	1-7	74-86	01-05
521 [fl]	Flail	19 sp	2h	5 days	4-8 lbs.	1-7	65-75	01-08
522 [fo]	Foil	21 sp	1he	5 days	2-3.5 lbs.	1-3	28-32	01-03
523 [hb]	Halbard	14 sp	pa	2 days	6-9 lbs.	1-7	65-75(w)	01-07
524 [ha]	Handaxe	5 sp	1he	1 day	4-6 lbs.	1-7	65-75(w)	01-04
525 [hp]	Harpoon	25 bp	th	1 day	4-8 lbs.	1-6	47-53(w)	01-04
526 [ja]	Javelin	3 sp	pa/th	1 day	3-5 lbs.	1-5	38-42(w)	01-04
527 [jo]	Jo	3 cp	1hc/2h	12 hours	2.5-6 lbs.	1-6/1-7	47-53(w)	01-03/01-05
528 [ka]	Katana	23 sp	1hs/2h	5 days	4-6 lbs.	1-7	76-92	01-03
529 [la]	Lance	5 sp	pa	1 day	8-15 lbs.	1-8	56-74(w)	01-07
530 [lo]	Lasso	4 tp	th	6 hours	2-5 lbs.	1-4	436-54(s)	01-06
531 [lb]	Long Bow	10 sp	mis	9 days	2-3 lbs.	—	—	01-05
532 [ls]	Long Sword	18 sp	1he	4 days	3.5-8 lbs.	1-6	64-76	01-04
533 [ma]	Mace	6 sp	1hc	2 days	3.5-8 lbs.	1-8	74-86(w)	01-02
534 [mg]	Main Gauche	12 sp	1he	3 days	1-2 lbs.	1-6	65-75	01-02
535 [ms]	Morning Star	16 sp	1hc	2 days	4-8 lbs.	1-7	65-75(w)	01-08
536 [nf]	Net (fishing)	1 sp	1hc/th	3 days	3-5 lbs.	1-5	56-64(s)	01-08
537 [ng]	Net (gladiator)	7 sp	1hc/th	7 days	2-4 lbs.	1-5	56-64(s)	01-05
538 [nd]	No-dachi	25 sp	2h	6 days	5-9 lbs.	1-7	68-82	01-05
539 [nu]	Nunchaku	4 cp	1hc/2h	1 day	1-2 lbs.	1-7	47-53(w)	01-07
540 [pi]	Pick	4 sp	2h	2 days	3-7 lbs.	1-8	47-53(w)	01-06
541 [pl]	Pilum	10 sp	pa/th	2 days	4-7 lbs.	1-6	38-42(w)	01-05
542 [qs]	Quarterstaff	5 cp	2h	1 day	3-5 lbs.	1-7	66-74(w)	01-03
543 [ra]	Rapier	22 sp	1hs	5 days	1.5-3 lbs.	1-4	38-42	01-04
544 [sa]	Sabre	9 sp	1hs	2 days	3-4 lbs.	1-5	64-76	01-03
545 [si]	Sai	13 sp	1hs	4 days	2-4 lbs.	1-5	64-76	01-02
546 [sc]	Scimitar	10 sp	1hs	3 days	3-5 lbs.	1-5	56-64	01-04
547 [sb]	Short Bow	6 sp	mis	3 days	2-3 lbs.	—	—	01-04
548 [ss]	Short Sword	7 sp	1he	2 days	2-4 lbs.	1-6	74-86	01-02
549 [sh]	Shuriken	4 sp	th	1 day	0.25-0.75 lb.	1-5	55-65	01-05
550 [sl]	Sling	9 bp	mis	12 hours	0.5-1 lb.	—	—	01-06
551 [sp]	Spear	23 bp	pa/th	1 day	3-8 lbs.	1-5	47-53(w)	01-05
552 [to]	Tomahawk	4 cp	1hs/th	12 hours	2-4 lbs.	1-7	47-53(w)	01-02
553 [tf]	Tonfa	9 cp	1hc	1 day	2-5 lbs.	1-7	47-53(w)	01-04
554 [tr]	Trident	4 sp	pa	2 days	4-6 lbs.	1-6	38-42(w)	01-05
555 [ts]	Two-Hand Sword	20 sp	2h	5 days	5-12 lbs.	1-8	69-81	01-05
556 [wh]	War Hammer	15 sp	1hc	2 days	4-7 lbs.	1-8	74-86(w)	01-04
557 [wm]	War Mattock	15 sp	2h	2 days	4-8 lbs.	1-8	65-75(w)	01-06
558 [wp]	Whip	2 sp	1hc	12 hours	2-5 lbs.	1-4	65-75(s)	01-06

The letters in brackets are the standard abbreviation for that weapon (used throughout the ***Rolemaster*** system).

Type is the ***Rolemaster*** weapon category that applies to the weapon. When two categories could be applied, they will be separated by a slash (each type must be developed separately).

A "(w)" after the strength of the weapon indicates the stats for the weapon are for a wooden shaft.
A "(s)" after the strength of the weapon indicates that the stats for the weapon are for soft (i.e., leather) weapons.

Notes: Missile weapons are not given breakage numbers and strengths because they are not used to directly strike something. Full rules for "device" breakage can be found in the *Rolemaster Standard Rules*.

ENCHANTED HERBS, BREADS, AND POISONS

Codes: The Codes give a small letter for the climate of areas where the herb (or poison) is normally found, a capital letter for the type of locale or terrain commonly associated with the herb, and a number corresponding to a difficulty modifier which is applied to any search rolls.

Climate Codes: a= arid; c = cold; e = everlasting cold; f = frigid (everlasting cold); h = hot and humid; m = mild temperate; s = semi-arid; t = cool temperate.

Locale Codes: A = Alpine; B = Breaks/wadis; C = Coniferous forest; D = Deciduous/mixed forest; F = Freshwater coasts & banks; G = Glacier/snowfield; H = Heath/scrub/moor; J = Jungle/rain forest; O = Ocean/saltwater shores; M = Mountain; S = Short grass; T = Tall grass; U = Underground; V = Volcanic; W = Waste; Z = Desert.

Difficulty of Finding: 1 = Routine (+30); 2 = Easy (+20); 3 = Light (+10); 4 = Medium (+0); 5 = Hard (-10); 6 = Very Hard (-20); 7 = Extremely Hard (-30); 8 = Sheer Folly (-50); 9 = Absurd (-70).

Form and Preparation: Brew — Effective when drunk 20 rounds after water is boiled; Ingest — Immediately usable and may be eaten, chewed, drunk, or inhaled, whichever is appropriate; Apply — Requires 1-10 rounds to prepare; herb is then applied directly onto injured area; Paste — Raw matter is made into a paste which may be put in food or drink or be applied to tools or weapons and stays effective up to 1 week, or until an object or person is struck; if a poison paste is used and a critical is obtained, the foe must make a RR or he receives the effect; if the attack result is merely hits (no crit), the poison is gone. Liquid — As paste, except it remains effective for 1 hour. Powder - May not be applied to weapons; only effective in food or drink.

Addiction Factor (AF): GMs may wish to make certain herbs addictive. The tables below show the suggested addiction factor. Each time an herb is used, the GM should roll d100 and add the AF to see if the user becomes addicted. If the result is over 100, the herb user is addicted. The character will now have a level 1 addiction. For each level of addiction that a character has, he must take that many doses of that herb in a week (making addiction rolls each time he takes the herb). Each subsequently failed addiction roll results in raising the addiction level by one.If the character fails to take enough of the herb in a given week, he will suffer the effects of withdrawal (see Section 11.1 for rules on chemical dependancy and withdrawal).

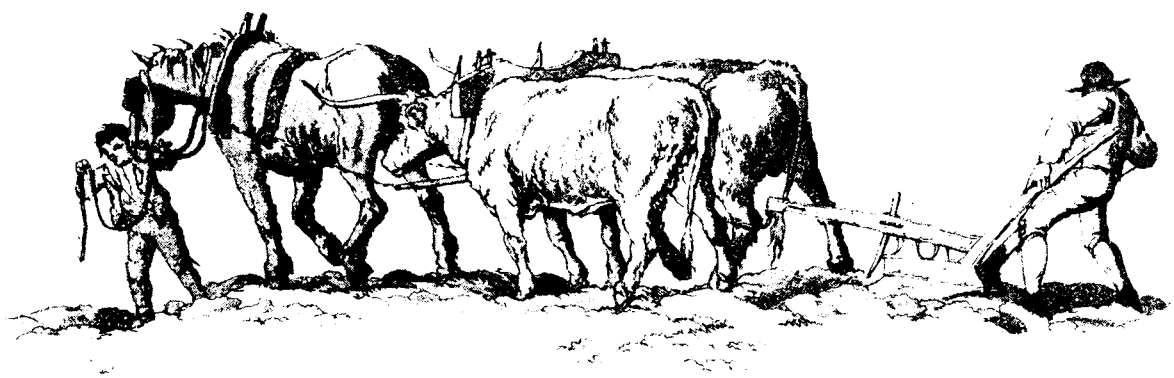
Effect: Unless otherwise stated, a maximum of one herb (dose) can take effect in a given round. The effect is based on a dose weighing approximately half an ounce. For poisons, the effect is the most severe effect that can be gained with the herb. You must use the tables provided in Section 11.0 (Poison and Diseases) to find the actual effect (based upon the RR of the victim).

HERBS

ID#	Name	Codes	Form/Prep	Cost	AF	Effect
Antidotes						
600	Argsbargies	a-Z-5	Flower/ingest	38 gp	7	Level 4 antidote for Muscle Poisons.
601	Eldaana	c-O-4	Leaf/brew	99 gp	2	Level 9 antidote for Reduction Poisons. Reverses the effect of the curse "Ugliness of Orn" (from Channeling spell list "Curses," level 15).
602	Menelar	f-C-5	Cone/brew	65 gp	4	Level 7 antidote for Circulatory Poisons.
603	Mook	t-M-3	Berry/ingest	30 gp	5	Level 3 antidote for Respiratory Poisons.
604	Quilmufur	m-C-7	Root/brew	49 gp	1	Level 8 antidote for Conversion Poisons.
605	Shen	t-F-6	Leaf/ingest	27 gp	3	Level 4 antidote for Nerve Poisons.
606	Sorel Nut	c-F-2	Nut/ingest	1 sp		Level 20 antidote for Nur-oiolosse (#649).
607	Ul-Naza	s-W-8	Leaf/ingest	430 gp	9	Level 50 antidote for any poison. Must be taken within 1 day of poisoning.
608	Yuth	h-J-8	Flower/ingest	29 gp	8	Level 20 antidote for nerve venoms.
Bone Repair						
610	Arfandas	c-F-6	Stem/apply	2 sp	1	Doubles rate of healing for fractures.
611	Baalak	h-O-8	Reed/brew	160 gp	12	Shatter repairs.
612	Bursthelas	t-S-8	Stalk/brew	110 gp	22	Shatter repairs.
613	Edram	c-F-8	Moss/ingest	31 gp	10	Mends bone.
614	Gursamel	t-S-7	Stalk/apply	30 gp	5	Mends bone.
Burn & Exposure Relief						
620	Alambas	s-O-4	Grass/apply	66 sp	4	Heals 4 sq' of burns (any).
621	Aloe	t-H-4	Leaf/apply	5 bp	0	Doubles healing rate for burns and minor cuts. Heals 5 hits if they result from burns.
622	Culkas	a-Z-4	Leaf/apply	35 gp	0	Heals 10sq' of burns (any).
623	Jojojopo	f-M-4	Leaf/apply	9 sp	0	Cures frostbite. Heals 2-20 hits resulting from cold.
624	Kelventari	t-T-3	Berry/apply	19 gp	0	Heals 1st and 2d degree burns, 1-10 hits resulting from heat.
625	Veldurak	h-O-5	Kelp/apply	8 sp	2	Cures frostbite. Heals 1-50 hits resulting from cold.
Circulatory Repair						
630	Anserke	h-O-6	Root/apply	75 gp	7	Stops bleeding by clotting and sealing wound. Takes 3 rds to to take effect. Patient cannot move (appreciably) without wound reopening.
631	Fek	h-O-6	Nut/brew	50 gp	5	Stops any bleeding. Takes 1-10 rds to take effect. Patient cannot move (appreciably) without wound reopening.
632	Harfy	s-S-6	Resin/apply	175 gp	9	Immediately stops any form of bleeding.
633	Hugburtun	s-Z-6	Fruit/apply	180 gp	6	Immediately stops any form of bleeding.
Concussion Relief						
640	Akbutege	s-O-2	Leaf/ingest	3 sp	1	Heals 1-10.
641	Arlan	t-T-2	Leaf/apply	13 sp	1	Heals 4-9. Wild heals 1-6.
642	Cusamar	c-H-7	Flower/ingest	30 gp	3	Heals 15-60 (10 + 5x D10).
643	Darsurion	c-M-3	Leaf/apply	35 bp	1	Heals 1-6.
644	Draaf	a-O-2	Leaf/ingest	7 sp	1	Heals 1-10 for each of 2 consecutive rds.
645	Dugmuthur	t-M-3	Berry/ingest	9 gp	2	Heals 10. Instant effect.
646	Gariig	a-Z-3	Cactus/ingest	55 gp	3	Heals 30. A.k.a. Grarig.
647	Gefnul	e-V-5	Lichen/ingest	90 gp	10	Heals 100.
648	Mirenna	c-M-3	Berry/ingest	10 gp	1	Heals 10. Instant effect.
649	Reglen	t-M-3	Moss/brew	75 gp	7	Heals 50.
650	Rewk	t-D-3	Nodule/brew	9 sp	1	Heals 2-20.
651	Thurl	t-D-1	Clove/brew	2 sp	1	Heals 1-4. Brew keeps 1-2 weeks.
652	Winclamit	c-C-7	Fruit/ingest	100 gp	12	Heals 3-300.
653	Yavethalion	m-O-5	Fruit/ingest	45 gp	4	Heals 5-50.

ID#	Name	Codes	Form/Prep	Cost	AF	Effect
General Purpose Herbs						
660	Arkasu	m-T-4	Sap/apply	12 gp	2	Doubles rate of healing for major wounds. Heals 2-12 hits.
661	Arthond	c-M-2	Root/ingest	1 bp	3	Decongestant. +20 to resistance vs common cold. Speeds recovery from respiratory illness by 5x.
662	Athelas	t-C-5	Leaf/brew	300 gp	20	Capable of curing anything while patient still alive, but healing only as effective as the healer. Full effect only in hands of an "ordained" king. Will not keep or give life.
663	Attanar	t-F-4	Moss/apply	8 gp	1	Cures fever.
664	Delrean	c-C-2	Bark/apply	3 sp	1	Repels any insect. Smells foul (noticeably so; range 50').
665	Felmather	m-O-5	Leaf/ingest	105 gp	15	Mental summons of one "friend" (beasts or folk). Range 300'x user's level. Coma relief.
666	Latha	t-F-4	Stem/brew	9 sp	4	+10 to disease resistance, cures common cold. Heals 1-2 hits.
667	Trudurs	c-F-4	Moss/brew	12 sp	8	+10 to disease resistance for 1-10 days.
668	Ukur	f-H-4	Nut/ingest	34 sp	1	One day's nutrition.
Life Preservation						
670	Carcatu	h-O-7	Grass/apply	89 gp	25	Lifekeeping (1 day).
671	Degiik	h-O-5	Leaf/ingest	100 gp	10	Lifekeeping (1 day).
672	Laurelin	m-O-9	Leaf/ingest	999 gp	21	Lifegiving for Elves, if given within 28 days of death.
673	Nur-oiolosse	f-F-8	Clove/ingest	200 gp	13	Lifegiving (1 day). Kills one day later unless Sorul nut (#607) is ingested.
674	Oiolosse	f-F-8	Clove/ingest	600 gp	22	Lifegiving for elves, if given within 7 days of death. Also known as Ololosse.
675	Olvar	f-O-6	Flower/ingest	200 gp	20	Lifekeeping (2-20 days).
676	Pathur	a-H-4	Nodule/brew	35 gp	7	Lifekeeping (1 hour).
677	Tyr-fira	f-A-9	Leaf/apply	1200 gp	33	Lifegiving, if given within 56 days.
678	Vulcurax	h-J-9	Berry/apply	1000 gp	0	Lifegiving, if given within 30 days.
Muscle, Cartilage, & Tendon Repair						
680	Arnuminas	m-S-2	Leaf/apply	6 bp	8	Doubles rate of healing for sprains, torn ligaments and cartilage damage.
681	Arpsusar	t-F-5	Stalk/brew	30 gp	15	Mends muscle damage.
682	Curfalaka	h-J-7	Fruit/injest	40 gp	6	Mends muscle damage.
683	Dagmather	s-S-5	Spine/brew	28 gp	12	Heals cartilage damage.
684	Ebur	m-O-4	Flower/ingest	22 gp	18	Repairs sprains.
685	Hegheg	h-S-8	Root/paste	25 gp	5	Heals cartilage damage.
686	Tarfeg	h-O-7	Flower/ingest	23 gp	3	Repairs sprains.
Nerve Repair						
690	Belramba	s-C-6	Lichen/brew	60 gp	20	Nerve repairs.
691	Terbas	m-D-3	Leaf/apply	2 gp	4	Doubles healing rate for nerve damage.
692	Wifurwif	t-M-7	Lichen/ingest	55 gp	15	Nerve repairs.
Organ Repair & Preservation						
700	Baldakur	c-M-8	Root/brew	102 gp	7	Restores sight.
701	Berterin	m-D-3	Moss/brew	19 gp	20	Preservation of organic material (up to body size) for 1 day.
702	Febfendu	c-F-4	Root/brew	90 gp	24	Restores hearing.
703	Kakduram	h-J-7	Fruit/ingest	90 gp	6	Restores hearing.
704	Pasamar	h-S-8	Grass/brew	75 gp	40	Preserves organic material.
705	Siran	s-S-6	Clove/ingest	80 gp	31	Restoration of 1 organ or area. Side effect: skin disease (appearance loss of 1-10) and 6 hits per round when skin is exposed to full sun.
706	Siriena	s-S-5	Grass/brew	70 gp	27	Preservation of any organic material (up to body size). Lasts 1 hour.
707	Tarnas	h-J-6	Nodule/brew	220 gp	60	Repairs organ damage. Nausea for 1-10 hours (-50).
708	Wek-wek	h-J-8	Nodule/brew	220 gp	50	Repairs organ damage.
Physical Alteration & Enhancement						
710	Agaath	e-G-2	Berry/ingest	5 gp	3	Breathe with low oxygen (25%+) 12 hours. Using this herb more than once every other day is lethal (no RR).
711	Ankit	s-B-7	Berry/ingest	100 gp	9	Restores as good sleep. Use in given week results in: once = 1 point loss of Co temp; twice = 5 point loss; thrice = 25 point loss.
712	Atigax	f-H-4	Root/brew	40 gp	12	Protects eyes in intense light or glare. Allows sight despite sudden or blinding light. Lasts 9 hours.
713	Breldiar	m-V-4	Flower/ingest	25 gp	7	Subtracts 30 from maneuver and melee. Adds 50 to spells and missile attacks. Euphoria. Lasts 1 hour.
714	Blue Eyes	m-S-7	Flower/brew	15 gp	25	Enhanced vision (triple range, +25 perception) plus mild infravision (50') for 3 hours. Using this herb more than once per day is lethal (no RR).
715	Elben's Basket	t-S-7	Root/brew	10 gp	15	Heart stimulant. Doubles speed for 1 round. Using this herb more than once per hour is lethal (no RR).
716	Gylvir	m-O-6	Algae/ingest	45 gp	20	Breathe under water (only) for 4 hours.
717	Grapeleaf	m-D-6	Nectar/ingest	7 gp	18	Intoxication and dreams (actions at -50) for 2 hours. Acts as 1 day's nutrition.
718	Joef	t-B-3	Powder/ingest	35 gp	23	Allows mental summons of one known sentient friend (up to half mile away).
719	Kathkusa	f-W-3	Leaf/ingest	50 gp	35	Increases strength for d10 rounds. +10 Strength bonus; double concussion damage delivered.
720	Kilmakur	h-S-7	Root/brew	65 gp	33	Protects versus natural flame and heat for 1-10 hours.

ID#	Name	Codes	Form/Prep	Cost	AF	Effect
Physical Alteration & Enhancement (continued)						
721	Klagul	s-S-3	Bud/brew	27 gp	7	Nightvision (up to 100' for 6 hours).
722	Marku	s-H-6	Nut/ingest	30 gp	5	Darkvision (up to 30' for 6 hours).
723	Megillos	c-M-3	Leaf/ingest	12 sp	19	Increases visual perception (double range, +25 perception) for 10 minutes.
724	Rud-tekma	h-J-6	Fruit/ingest	25 gp	10	Bonus of +20 when casting spells. Lasts 1 hour. Maneuver and melee bonus -20. 10% chance any targeted spell will be cast on nearest unintended target.
725	Splayfoot	m-F-4	Seeds/brew	23 gp	16	For "good in heart" instills confidence and singleness of purpose (+25 to all actions) for 1 to 4 hours.
726	Yaran	t-S-2	Pollen/ingest	9 sp	7	Acute smell and taste (+50 perception) for 1 hour.
727	Zulsendura	a-U-4	Mshrm/ingest	70 gp	22	Haste (3 rounds).
728	Zur	c-U-4	Fungus/brew	12 gp	8	Enhances smell and hearing (triple range; +50 perception). Lasts 1 hour.
Stat Modifiers						
730	Lestagil	a-Z-9	Cryst/ingest	520 gp	45	Restores any stat losses other than those due to age. Affects only one stat per use.
731	Merrig	s-S-8	Thorn/brew	90 gp	50	Daily use increases Appearance by 5. Interruption of use will not reverse addictive resistance, but results in loss of benefit. Withdrawal means loss of 15 from Reasoning and Memory.
Stun Relief						
740	Januk-ty	s-S-6	Root/brew	110 sp	2	Stun relief (3 rounds).
741	Suranie	t-F-3	Berry/ingest	2 gp	3	Stun relief (1 round).
742	Vinuk	s-S-4	Root/brew	12 sp	4	Stun relief (1-10 rounds).
743	Welwal	h-J-7	Leaf/ingest	12 gp	3	Stun relief (3 rounds).
744	Witav	h-J-6	Leaf/ingest	12 gp	5	Stun relief (2 rounds).
Enchanted Breads						
750	Alshanak	t-T-2	Bread/ingest	35 gp	5	4 oz. slice is one dose. Heat sensitive vision (infravision up to 50') for 1 hour. Tastes of raisins and carrots. Loaf keeps 1-2 months.
751	Cram	c-U-2	Bread/ingest	14 sp	1	4 oz. slice is one dose. Dwarven Waybread that provides five day's nutrition per slice. Tastes of mushrooms and pepper. Loaf keeps 7 weeks.
752	Hesguratu	c-M-3	Bread/ingest	45 gp	10	4 oz. slice is one dose. Increase strength for 1 minute. +10 Strength bonus; and double concussion hits delivered. Tastes of wheat and onions. Loaf keeps 1 month.
753	Kykykyl	m-D-2	Bread/ingest	50 gp	6	4 oz. slice is one dose. Allows one to see with complete clarity (as on a cloudless day) for 1 hour, regardless of weather, lighting, or eye injuries (unless eye destroyed). Tastes of garlic, carrots, and ginger. Loaf keeps 2-20 weeks.
754	Tatharsul	t-O-3	Bread/ingest	75 gp	15	4 oz. slice is one dose. Restores nervous system to normal in 1-10 rounds. Tastes of pumpkin and lemon. Loaf keeps 1-2 months.
755	Ulginor	c-O-1	Bread/ingest	4 sp	0	4 oz. slice is one dose. Provides one day's nutrition. Tastes of cheese and spinach. Loaf keeps 1-2 months.



INTOXICANTS (MIND ALTERANTS)

ID#	Name	Codes	Form/Prep	Cost	AF	Effect
800	Arunya	m-S-3	Root/brew	2 bp	50	Causes sleep and quick unconsciousness. One hour's sleep equals 4.
801	Brorkwilb	m-V-3	Flower/ingest	9 gp	45	Euphoric. Allows for shared dreams with family member who is also sleeping.
802	Galenas	m-H-4	Leaf/ingest	5 sp	10	Leaf produces smoke which affects 20' radius. Relaxes for 1-10 rounds (-75 to all actions) .
803	Gort	h-J-5	Leaf/inhale	10 gp	20	Euphoric hallucinogen. +10 to user's Appearance for 2 hours, but afterwards causes user to be weak 1-10 hours (-50 to all actions).
804	Hoak-foer	s-S-2	Flower/ingest	67 gp	30	Hallucinogen. Cures mind loss and mental diseases, but prevents all movement for 1-10 weeks.
805	Hugar	h-O-4	Root/ingest	1 sp	33	Causes sleep and quick unconsciousness. One hour's sleep equals 6.
806	Nelisse	s-V-5	Leaf/brew	9 sp	15	Euphoria for 1 hour (all actions at -50). Gives 1 day's nutrition.
807	Swigmakril	a-Z-6	Flower/brew	50 gp	25	Relaxant. User takes double usual hits before passing out. All actions are at -30. Lasts 1-2 hours.
808	Swuth	h-O-5	Leaf/ingest	4 sp	3	Invisible smoke relaxes (-75 to all actions) for 1-10 rounds.
809	Tukamur	s-S-4	Grass/brew	38 sp	100	Euphoric. Allows for shared dreams with friend similarly affected.
810	Alcohol	varies	varies/ingest	varies	1	Addiction checks should only be made upon reaching a "drunken" state (i.e., drinking with moderation does not cause addiction). Certain kinds of alcohol may have a higher (or lower) AF.
811	Tobacco	varies	varies/ingest	varies	1	Addiction checks should only be made after inhaling the smoke from more than three ounces of tabacco. Certain kinds of tobacco may have a higher (or lower) AF.

POISONS

The effects shown below are the specific effects of the poison. These effects will occur when the victim fails his RR. These effects will occur in addition to the general effects of that type of poison (and take priority when there is a conflict). If no specific effect is given, see Section 11.2 on Poisons for further general effects of poisons. The given level has a letter designation that allows for level variability (see C&M for how to use level variability codes).

ID#	Name	Codes	Form/Prep	Cost	AF	Effect
Circulatory Poisons						
900	Carnegurth	a-Z-4	Flower/liquid	53 gp	0	Level 1C poison. Reddish juice causes massive blood clotting.
901	Jeggarukh	m-U-5	Bats/powder	71 gp	3	Level 6B poison. Black powder gives 10-100 hits. Maximum of moderate general effects.
902	Karfar	h-J-4	Leaf/paste	142 gp	0	Level 7C poison. Reddish paste causes heart to malfunction. All effects begin in 2-12 rounds.
903	Klytun	s-B-4	Root/paste	53 gp	0	Level 5A poison. Golden paste causes 1-10 day coma. Effects begin after all general effects have begun.
904	Sharkasar	m-C-6	Root/paste	2 gp	0	Level 10D poison. Brown paste gives 1-10 hits. Maximum of moderate effects.
905	Sharduvaak	a-Z-7	Berry/liquid	36 gp	6	Level 3E poison. Brown liquid slows blood flow and victim needs double usual sleep until fully recovered. Maximum of moderate general effects.
Conversion Poisons						
910	Bragolith	c-C-8	Juice/liquid	120 gp	4	Level 5B poison. Bluish juice causes victim's body to heat up. Severe effects result in spontaneous combustion. Comes from a phosphorescent green firefly.
911	Brithagurth	f-F-8	Fish/liquid	25 gp	0	Level 2A poison. Black venom causes hardening of tendons in 1-4 appendages. Severe effects make appendages usesless.
912	Henuial	c-C-8	Bee/liquid	80 gp	1	Level 6E poison. Yellow venom acts on victim's eyes. Severe effects converts optic juices to honey.
913	Ondokamba	c-U-3	Bat/liquid	29 gp	2	Level 2C. Green venom acts on appendages. Severe effects turn 1-4 appendages to stone.
914	Muilfana	t-C-4	Sap/liquid	52 gp	0	Level 2C poison. Orange tree sap affects mucous membrances. Severe affects turns mucous to acid (blinds, or destroys windpipe and/or esophagus).
915	Taynaga	c-C-5	Bark/powder	27 gp	0	Level 8D poison. Brownish powder sterilizes and gives 5-50 hits. Maximum of moderate general effects.
Muscle Poisons						
920	Dynallca	h-F-3	Leaf/paste	14 gp	3	Level 3B poison. Tan paste affects hearing and gives 1-10 hits. Maximum of Severe general effects (destroys hearing).
921	Kaktu	s-S-7	Flower/liquid	29 gp	3	Level 1A poison. Affects 1-4 appendages. Maximum of Severe general effects (loss of 1-100 in temporary Agility).
922	Trusa	h-J-8	Frog/paste	31 gp	6	Level 4C poison. Acts in 1-10 rounds. Mild effect is blindness in 1-2 eyes. Moderate effect is complete blindness and coma. Severe effect is death.

ID#	Name	Codes	Form/Prep	Cost	AF	Effect
Nerve Poisons						
930	Acaana	f-M-7	Flower/paste	600 gp	0	Level 10E poison. Black paste affects nervous system. Extreme effect destroys nervous system and kills instantly.
931	Asgurash	c-T-7	Snake/paste	31 gp	1	Level 3F poison. Brownish red snake venom. Maximum of moderate effects (upper body paralysis).
932	Cathaana	m-D-6	Nut/powder	36 gp	1	Level 1D poison. White powder instantly causes mild euphoria (victim at -50 for 1-10 rounds). Extreme effect is that brain is destroyed after 1-10 minutes.
933	Juth	a-Z-5	Scorpion/liq	41 gp	0	Level 2B poison. Maximum of severe effect (insanity in 1-100 weeks).
934	Ruth-i-Iaur	s-U-7	Drakes/liquid	56 gp	1	Level 4C poison. Brownish cave-drake saliva. Maximum of severe effects (erosion of nervous system in 1-20 rounds—victim left at -50 to -100 activity).
935	Slird	h-J-8	Fruit/paste	13 gp	1	Level 2C poison. Acts in 1-2 rds. Maximum of moderate effects (victim loses feeling in 1-6 extremities [head, genitals, hands, feet] for 1-100 days).
936	Ul-acaana	e-M-8	Flower/paste	1200 gp	0	Level 20A poison. Extreme effects result in destruction of nervous system (paralyzed instantly; dead in 1-10 minutes).
937	Wek-baas	h-O-9	Fish/liquid	70 gp	0	Level 5D poison. Acts in 1-100 rounds. Mild effect is deep sleep. Moderate effect is degeneration of balance and hearing (-1-100 to Agility and -50 to perception). Severe effect is total paralysis (this is the maximum effect).
Reduction Poisons						
940	Lhugruth	e-U-6	Dragon/liquid	300 gp	11	Level 10B poison. Grey/black blood affects exposed areas. Maximum of severe effects (dissolves inflicted area in 1-10 rounds). Affects metals and organic material. Does not affect glass, sand, or pottery.
941	Ondohithui	e-A-5	Lichen/paste	60 gp	0	Level 3D poison. Blue/grey paste causes dehydration. Extreme effect is fatal in 1-10 minutes.
942	Nimnaur	t-D-5	Spider/liquid	23 gp	0	Level 3A poison. Milky white juices affects organs. Maximum of severe effects (liquifies one organ in 1-10 minutes).
943	Silmaana	m-T-2	Stalk/powder	4 gp		Level 9C poison. Silver powder scars skin; gives 2-20 hits. Maximum of moderate effects.
944	Slota	t-D-7	Spider/paste	36 gp	0	Level 5A poison. Extreme effect is slow (1 day) paralysis and death (1-10 days).
945	Zaganzar	t-M-6	Root/liquid	139 gp	0	Level 5H poison. Bluish extract. Maximum of severe effects (blinds by reducing optic nerve to water); gives 1-10 hits.
Respiratory Poisons						
950	Galenaana	c-A-6	Leaf/powder	179 gp	0	Level 9D poison. Green powder. Maximum of severe effects (except for elves who can suffer Extreme effects).
951	Hith-i-Girith	f-M-5	Leaf/liquid	12 gp	2	Level 4C poison. Mist/vapor from tree acts as depressant causing immediate and continuing sleep. There are no other effects.
952	Jegga	m-U-5	Bats/paste	92 gp	0	Level 7B poison. Brown paste gives 1-100 hits. Maximum of mild effects.
953	Jitsu	m-O-4	Clams/liquid	34 gp	0	Level 5B poison. Yellow venom gives 5-50 hits. Maximum of mild effects.
954	Jitsutyr	c-F-6	Clams/paste	145 gp	4	Level 2A poison. Tan paste. Extreme effect destroys lungs and kills in 1-100 rounds.
955	Kly	s-H-5	Berry/paste	154 gp	0	Level 3F poison. Brown juice gives 3-300 hits. Maximum of mild effects.
956	Uraana	t-S-3	Leaf/paste	12 gp	6	Level 6A poison. Creamy paste gives 3-30 hits. Maximum of mild effects.
957	Vuraana	h-T-4	Flower/paste	42 gp	6	Level 2A poison. Pinkish paste delivers 1-100 hits. Maximum of mild effects.

CONVERTING FROM OLD TO NEW

When converting characters from previous versions of ***Rolemaster*** to the new ***Rolemaster***, there are basically two approaches that may be taken. Players should check with their GM before doing one or the the other.

14.1 THE EASY WAY...

Not the quick way. The only way for the characters to gain all of the benefits of the new system is to "re-create" them using the new rules. This requires that the character concept be closely understood and be used as a guide when developing the character under the new system.

The GM should assist the player to ensure that the original character concept is maintained. However, it should be recognized that certain aspects of the original concept might have to change to fit the new system.

If the original profession is not represented in the Standard Rules, there are two paths to procede on: convert to an equivalent Standard Profession (see below), or retire the character for a while (until the old profession is revised in a future companion). If you are converting a spell using profession into an equivalent Standard Rules profession, the GM should examine all of that profession's base lists before including them. He may decide to replace any or all of them with spell lists from the Standard Rules. Remember that Spell Types have been revised and old spell types are not necessarily valid or appropriate.

PROFESSION CONVERSION CHART

Profession (Companion)	Notes on Conversion
Adept (AC)	Magician with one evil Essence Base list, the Alchemist Base lists, and the Amateur Mage TP.
Alchemist (—)	Magician with Alchemist Base Lists.
Archmage (I)	Either the Arcanist or Wizard (from the Arcane Companion) or anyone of the Hybrid spell casters from the Standard Rules (and allow him to select Open Lists from all realms; in all cases, use the Amateur Mage TP.
Arcist (IV)	Arcanist from the Arcane Companion.
Arms Master (VII)	Magent with the Weapon Master TP.
Assassin (III)	Rogue with the Assassin TP.
Astral Traveller (IV)	Mystic with the Wanderer TP.
Astrologer (—)	Healer with Astrologer Base Lists.
Barbarian (I)	Fighter with the Berserker or Shaman Priest TP.
Bashkar (III)	Rogue with the Berserker TP.
Beastmaster (II)	Ranger with the Amateur Mage and/or Animal Friend TPs.
Bounty Hunter (III)	Rogue with the Hunter and Mercenary TPs.
Burglar (I)	Thief with the Burglar TP.
Cavalier (III)	Fighter with the Knight TP.
Chaotic Lord (III)	Paladin with Evil Channeling Base Lists.
Charlatan (AC)	Layman specializing in trickery skills.
Conjuror (II)	Illusionist with the Shaman Priest TP and with Entity Summons and Dark Summons as base lists.
Crafter (III/AC)	Layman with the Amateur Mage TP.
Craftsman (III/AC)	Layman with the Crafter TP.
Creator (VI)	Healer with Crafter TP.
Crystal Mage (III)	Sorcerer with the Amateur Mage TP.
Cultist (VI)	Ranger with Evil Channeling Base Lists.
Dancer (II)	Thief with the Performer TP.
Delver (I/AC)	Bard with the Crafter TP.
Dervish (II)	Bard with the Amateur Mage TP.
Doppleganger (VII)	Mentalist.
Dream Lord (III)	Sorcerer with either the Amateur Mage or Shaman Priest TP; and access to either Illusionist or Cleric Base Lists.
Druid (I)	Animist (who has been revised more along the lines of a Druid).
Duelist (III)	Fighter with the Weapon Master TP.
Dwarf Alchemist (AC)	Dabbler with the Alchemist Base Lists and the Crafter TP.
Elemental Channeler (EC)	Cleric with the Amateur Mage TP.
Elemental Chanter (EC)	Mystic with the Amateur Mage TP and access to the Dark Summons and Entity Summons.
Elemental Enchanter (EC)	Magician with the Amateur Mage TP and Alchemist Base Lists.
Elemental Hunter (EC)	Ranger with the Amateur Mage TP and access to the Dark Summons and Entity Summons lists.
Elemental Physician (EC)	Healer with the Amateur Mage TP and access to the Dark Summons and Entity Summons.
Elemental Summon. (EC)	Illusionist with the Amateur Mage TP and with Entity Summons and Dark Summons as base lists.
Elemental Warrior (EC)	Paladin with the Amateur Mage TP and access to any two of the Magician Base lists.
Elementalist (VII)	Dabbler with the Amateur Mage TP.
Enchanter (IV)	Mystic with the Amateur Mage TP.
Engineer (AC)	Ranger with the Amateur Mage TP.
Evil Alchemist (AC)	Magician with the Alchemist Base Lists and the Necromancy list and the Dark Channels list (both in Evil Channeling).
Evil Elementalist (EC)	Either the Magician, the Cleric, or the Mentalist with four of the six Evil lists for his realm; and the Amateur Mage TP.
Farmer (III)	Layman.
Forcemage (V)	Magician.
Free Thinker (VI)	Thief with the Loremaster TP.

PROFESSION CONVERSION CHART CONTINUED)

Profession (Companion)	Notes on Conversion
Geomancer (AC)	Sorcerer with access to Open Arcane lists and the Amateur Mage TP.
Grand Vizier (AC)	Mystic with the Item Lore Base list (Bard) and the Alchemist Base Lists.
Gypsy (III)	Thief with the Performer TP.
Hero (VI)	Fighter.
High Elementalist (EC)	Magician with the Amateur Mage TP and access to the Sorcerer Base Lists.
High Warrior Monk (I)	Warrior Monk with the Martial Artist TP.
Houri (IV)	Bard with some of the Evil Mentalism Base Lists.
Inorganic Alchemist (AC)	Magician with the Alchemist Base Lists and the Crafter TP.
Leader (IV)	Fighter with the Zealot TP.
Macabre (III)	Sorcerer with the Weapon Master TP.
Magus (III)	Sorcerer with the Amateur Mage TP.
Maleficant (V)	Healer with Evil Channeling Base Lists and the Shaman Priest TP.
Montebanc (III)	Magent with the Con Man TP.
Moon Mage (III)	Ranger with the Amateur Mage TP.
Mystic Elementalist (EC)	Animist with the Amateur Mage TP.
Necromancer (II)	Sorcerer who has access to the Evil Channeling Base Lists.
Nightblade (I)	Magent.
Noble Warrior (III)	Paladin with the Knight TP.
Organ. Alchemist (AC)	Magician with the Alchemist Base Lists and the Doctor TP.
Paladin (I)	Paladin.
Power Master (VI)	Magician (with some Arcane spell lists).
Professional (III)	Layman with one of the "professional" type TPs (e.g., Doctor, Diplomat, etc.).
Rogue Element. (EC)	Dabbler with the Amateur Mage TP and access to the Dark Summons and Entity Summons spell lists.
Romantic (VI)	Fighter with the Philosopher TP.
Royal Alchemist (AC)	Magician with the Alchemist Base Lists and the Cloistered Academic TP.
Runemaster (II)	Magician with the Cloistered Academic or Crusading Academic TP.
Sage (II)	Bard with either the Cloistered Academic or the Crusading Academic TPs.
Sailor (III)	Rogue with the Sailor TP.
Scholar (II)	Thief with either the Crusading Academic or Cloistered Academic TP.
S/F No Profession (VI)	Layman.
Science Mage (VI)	Layman (with some spell lists).
Seeker (VI)	Mystic with the Crafter and Loremaster TPs.
Seer (—)	Mentalist with Seer Base Lists.
Shadow Mage (VII)	Sorcerer with access to both Evil Channeling and Evil Essence Lists.
Shaman (II)	Animist with the Shaman Priest TP.
Shaman Alchem. (AC)	Animist with the Alchemist Base lists and the Shamanic Priest TP.
Sleuth (III)	Magent with the Detective TP.
Smith (AC)	Layman specializing in metal crafts.
Tarotmage (VII)	Magician with access to some Evil Essence Lists.
Thaumaturge (AC)	Mentalist with the Alchemist Base lists.
Theocratist (AC)	Cleric with the Alchemist Base lists, and the Crusading Academic and Zealot TPs.
Theurgist (AC)	Cleric with the Alchemist Base lists.
Tinker (AC)	Bard with the Prosthetics Base list (Lay Healer) and the Crafter TP.
Trader (II)	Thief with the Merchant TP.
Warlock (II)	Healer who has Mystic Base Lists and the Amateur Mage TP.
Warrior (III)	Fighter with the Weapon Master and Soldier TPs.
Warrior Mage (II)	Dabbler with the Amateur Mage TP.
Witch (II)	Sorcerer with the Shaman Priest TP.
Witchhunter (VII)	Magehunter from the Arcane Companion or use the Paladin with the Amateur Mage TP.
Wizard (V)	Magician.

Note: TP stands for Training Package

14.2 THE HARD WAY...

When using this system, there are several aspects of character development that the character will miss out on. For example, he will miss out on the new Adolescent level ranks (average much more than was available in the old system), Training Packages, the faster stat gain system, and (to some extent) Talents and Flaws.

Roll up your sleeves, pull out your calculators, and sharpen your pencils. Here are the guidelines for converting characters to the new system. The following steps should be followed in the same sequence presented.

14.2.1 STATS

The first step in converting characters is to convert the stats. All of the stats have a one to one relationship with the new system. However, because initial stats (both temporary and potentail) are generated in a slightly different fashion, a check should be made at this point.

Total all of the temporary and potential stats (separately); use the point system as if you were creating a new character (i.e., stats over 91 cost exponentially more); use the systems presented below.

Temporary Stats

The total of the temporary stats should be no less than 620 or no more than 950. If the total does not fall within this range, the stats should be adjusted until they rise up to the minimum or lower to the maximum.

Potential Stats

The total of the potential stats should be no less than 870 or no more than 950. If the total does not fall within this range, the stats should be adjusted until they rise up to the minimum or lower to the maximum. Note that characters reach their potentials faster under the new system (most characters developed under the new system will reach potentials in about five levels).

Stat Bonuses

With the new stats converted, figure the new stat bonuses as you do in the Standard Rules. Racial Stat Bonuses can be found in the Standard Rules (do not use the old racial bonuses). If your character had a miscellaneous modifier to his stat bonuses under the old system, that old bonus should be divided by 4 before being added to the rest of the bonuses. For example, if the character had a bonus of +15 to his Strength (from a background option), he should get a +4 to his Strength under the new system.

Option: A GM may choose to allow the new characters to take Talents that match their abilities gained from old system background options. In this case, divide the old miscellaneous stat bonuses by 3 and find the stat bonus that matches in the Talents section. However, if this option is used, an appropriate Flaw must be generated by the GM (previous flaws are ignored).

14.2.2 HITS

The number of ranks in Body Development should be translated directly to the new Body Development skill. Hits can then be calculated as presented in the Standard Rules. If the number of ranks in Body Development is not known, it can be derived by looking at the total hits and dividing by the average die result for the die-type used in rolling hits (5.5 for a d10, 4.5 for a d8, etc.).

For example, if the character has 100 hits and normally rolls a d10 for hits, he would have 18 ranks of Body Development (100 divided by 5.5). If that same character rolls a d8 for hits he would have 22 ranks of Body Development.

14.2.3 POWER POINTS

There are two different cases for converting power points. Use the guidelines below that apply to the way you were calculating PPs under the old system

Core RM Power Points

Under the old core ***RM*** system, a character received 0-3 PPs per level. If you used this system, the following guidelines apply to you.





Divide the character's old PPs by 3. This is the number of ranks of Power Point Development the character has. Simply calculate the total number of PPs in the new system by using the system presented in the Standard Rules.

For example, if an 8th level Magician had 16 PPs in the old system (e.g., he had a 95 realm stat, and gained 2 PPs per level), he would have 5 ranks of PP development in the new system (resulting in 42 to 47 PPs depending on what race he was). If a 20th level Cleric had 60 PPs in the old system (e.g., he had a 100 stat, and gained 3 PPs per level), he would have 20 ranks in the new system (resulting in 125 PPs in the new system).

Power Point Development Skill

In *Rolemaster Companion II*, the Power Development Skill was introduced. If you used this system, record how many ranks in Power Point Development you possessed before. Simply calculate the total number of PPs in the new system by using the system presented in the Standard Rules.

14.2.4 SPELL LISTS

To determine the number of ranks in each spell list, simply record to what level the character previously knew his lists. For example, if the character knew one Open List to 5th level, he should have 5 ranks in that list. If the character knew a Base List to 10th level, he should have 10 ranks in that list.

14.2.5 OTHER SKILLS

For most skills, simply translate the number of ranks in the old system to an equal number of ranks in the new system. If an old skill is not covered under the new system, the GM must make a decision to either exclude the skill, or find a category appropriate for the old skill.

> **Note:** *There are two reasons for a skill to not be listed in the new system: either the skill was deemed out of balance with the rest of the system or the skill was similar to another, already existing skill. In the first case (it should be obvious what skills these are), the GM should consider very carefully before including the skill within the new skill system. Because of the new tiered system, it could cause some serious game balance problems. In the latter case, the GM should feel free to include the skill (this mostly applies to the various Lore-type skills and a few of the specialized types of other skills)*

After skill ranks are determined, you must determine how many ranks to assign to skill categories. For each category in which the character has skills, simply assign a number of ranks to that category equal to the highest developed skill in the category.

Finally, calculate the skill category bonuses (as detailed in the Standard Rules) and then the skill bonuses. Compared to the character's old skill bonuses, some will be higher and some will be lower (mostly it will depend on whether you used Level Bonuses in the old system). Low level characters will likely have slightly higher bonuses in the new system; while high level character will likely have slightly lower bonuses in the new system.

14.2.6 EVERYTHING ELSE...

Everything else is either a straight translation (i.e., there is no difference between the old and the new), or the new can be figured by using the new numbers already figured above. For example, all Resistance Roll modifiers can be figured by using the newly figured stat bonuses (the same applies to DB, etc.). Armor Type remains the same from the old system to the new.

14.2.7 ONCE CONVERTED

Once a character is converted to the new system, all of the new rules for character development should apply. This includes calculation of new Development Points to spend, skill costs, profession bonuses, spell list development, etc.

THE GAME WORLD

Any world, like our own or any any other, is a dynamic place, consisting of a variety of physical, cultural, and metaphysical aspects which interact and interrelate. The separate characteristics—be they visible or invisible, aged or fleeting—are intertwined as parts of the whole. They cannot be disturbed without affecting everything else to some degree. Change is constant, and involves a varying alteration to each component. It is the result of the seemingly infinite chain reactions that mark time. Nothing remains the same for more than an instant.

Nonetheless, when constructing a setting, the GM will find it essential to freeze time and break the world down into convenient, workable development concepts (e.g., weather or river systems). The forces described above should not be ignored; rather, the interrelationship should be kept in mind each time the GM creates a new characteristic of the setting.

General patterns give us the guidelines for the development of specific concepts or constructs. The overall design approach should be a progression from the general to the specific, from the top down. The more basic the part, the more fundamental—for each individual concept or construct is shaped by the general characteristics common to its class. When developing an area, then, the GM should start with the basics, the general or common denominators. By first constructing a framework, specific places and aspects of the setting can be built on this foundation. This allows each individual construct to embody the general features common to its area.

Setting design is a process of layering each new, more specific idea on its more general precedents. The following sections describe such a process.

15.1 THE WORLD

The physical setting of a given world provides the most general of framework. After all, the environment affects every living being that interacts with it, forcing certain forms of adaptation.

A world environment is a combination of surface and subsurface formations, together with the climate or atmospheric patterns. Naturally, these factors are constantly interacting and in motion.

15.1.1 THE GODS, THE COSMOS, AND THE WORLD

Before constructing the physical world the GM should decide what sort of god, gods, and/or demigods there will be, if any. The nature of these deities, and any interplanetary factors should be established so that the GM can gauge their involvement in the formation and operation of the world.

The inhabitants of the world may have varying views of the cosmos and the deities they believe to be in control of their lives. Naturally, perceptions will usually differ from reality.

This process will enable the GM to bring the power and desire of a Creator or group of Creators, the Primary Powers to bear. In addition, the Secondary Powers—demigods and the like—may have some, albeit lesser, involvement. The GM should assign characteristics to each of these deities and chart their connection to the world, noting where the actions of the inhabitants and nature are affected.

15.1.2 THE PHYSICAL WORLD

The GM should choose a world which he finds both intriguing and convenient. The nature of the land and sea will help dictate the flora and fauna; it shapes the types of cultures, and therefore inhabitants of the world.

Gravitational forces, the elements, and the ratio of the solid land to the seas can vary quite a bit, depending on need. One world might be a flat, round arid mass, with little or no water; another might be a watery globe that contains a sprinkling of isles. Although certain of these alien worlds are marked by gasses and foreign elements, particularly those found in science fiction FRP games, *Campaign Law* dwells on those worlds which rely on some combination of land and water to shape the action.

15.1.3 THE LAND

After settling on a very general picture of the world, the GM should rough out the lands, placing the continent(s) in a comfortable relationship so that contacts or barriers by the sea are logical. Once the major land masses are set down, the GM can go about adding terrain features.

Land formations can be categorized, although their placement is interdependent, also tied to climate. The GM can look to the continent's dominant terrain groups, of which three might be most prominent: (1) mountains; (2) lowlands; and (3) wastes. Handling these formations is a two-step process: first one must understand the basics of creation and operation of the environment and then one must place the features in reasonable proximity to related ecosystems and continental constructions. The following notes may help to illuminate some basic physical concepts or principles.

Creation and Operations Mountains

Mountains occur as a result of a number of forces, and normally every range is the product of more than one of four basic kinds of building. Where the crust of the world is compressed and the surface squeezed, *folding* occurs. When a whole mass of the crust receives an inordinate amount of pressure and breaks away from the surrounding masses, a *fault* occurs breaking the surface of the world; a spectacular result appears, as the thrust produces a sheer cliff on one side of the uplift. *Volcanic activity* yields the third type of mountain, peaks formed by the layering of debris erupting out of the world's crust and mantle. *Dome* mountains are also created as the result of a rush of subterranean material toward the surface. The dome is actually a "blister" in the surface which is filled by an upward intrusion of volcanic matter which does not fully penetrate.



Erosion and glacial activity sculpt the peaks, and over time, the differentiation of result can be staggering. A few patterns, however, help account for the appearance of many mountains:

a) Young mountains are relatively tall and jagged when compared to their very old counterparts.

b) Fault-based peaks can be subjected to a number of grinding periods; during which the adjacent sections of crust slide up and down across one another. Very sheer, often polished and smooth, surfaces result on one side of the mountain. Since the peak is a portion of crust which rises at an angle, the other side remains a gentle incline.

c) Young dome peaks appear as huge rounded hills; but as they get older, the surface erodes relatively quickly, exposing the harder volcanic core material and leaving a great mass of rock which seems to spring from the often flat surrounding countryside. Where the surface rock has not yet eroded, surrounding ridges remain.

d) Folded mountains erode in a manner similar to the dome peaks: their crust core is exposed as the softer surface rock is washed away. The result is a central ridge surrounded by "hogback" ridges or "downs" which are the remnant of the surface covering, and have a steep inner slope and a very gentle outer slope. Unlike their dome brethren, there is no ultra-hard volcanic rock core material; instead, the upward thrusting crust is deeper and less dense. In addition, dome peaks normally occur as isolated mountains, while folded mountains form long ridges.

e) Glacial activity results in deeply carved or sheer rock faces, large deposits of scree or rubble, and U-shaped mountain valleys. V-shaped mountain valleys are caused by stream erosion.

Placement of Mountains

Mountain ranges are obvious indicators of subterranean activity and should be located in areas where there has been surface and crust disruption. Much of this disruption can be explained by the actions of geological plates.

The crust is composed of a number of solid 'plates' of earth which sit or float upon a fiery liquid rock layer of the upper mantle called magma. These plates cover the whole surface of the world and move about very slowly. They may separate only slightly, since their parting results in a collision elsewhere.

a) *Mountains frequently lie near to and parallel with the seacoast.* Coastlines are often formed from the landmasses rising out of the collision between plates. When plates collide, one pushes under the other, causing a buckling of the surfaces and forcing one plate upward. Coastal lowlands are the first exposed part of an uplift that begins its climb at the edge of the undersea continental shelf and continues ascending toward a section of foothills and mountains that lie inland, relatively close to the oceanside. The mountains are a result of the buckling or folding of the surface, and normally parallel the principle route of the coastline. Depending on their size and the effect the GM desires, their highest reaches might be anywhere from ten to three hundred miles from the shore. Generally, the higher the mountains, the further the distance inland.

b) *Volcanoes occur most frequently in areas where folding occurs, alongside other mountains, or where plates have been separating.* Mountain ranges have their share of volcanoes, but other significant groupings occur when plates pull apart. These latter areas of volcanic activity are often found in the middle of oceans, roughly surrounding the continents themselves with "rings of fire." Such activity accounts for many island groups; they are volcanic deposits that sharply rise beside accompanying trenches in the crust, the result of exposing the magma to the surface on a massive scale.

Lowlands

a) Mountain ranges normally have one steep and one gentle side. On the side with the less severe grade, foothills abound; the other escarpment drops suddenly into the flatlands. More often than not, the steeper face is the side that faces away from the nearest coastline.

b) Broken lowlands—locales marked by rugged hills, ridges, escarpments, buttes, etc.—occur in a variety of areas, although the heaviest concentrations occur alongside the mountain ranges or where the leading edges of great glaciers quit moving forward. In the latter case, bowls or trough-shaped valleys are normally left in the land. After a number of years, these fill to form numerous lakes.

c) Old weathered rock of a flat-lying sedimentary variety underlies much of the flattest plains. Often these flat areas are formed out of surface rock dating back to the creation of the world.

Wastes

Waste lands generally occur where temperatures, soil quality, overuse, and/or precipitation levels are in some way extreme. Climatic patterns account for much of their state, but land and water formations also play a part:

a) Where prevailing winds cross mountains, the air rises and cools, causing precipitation in the highlands. The result is a tendency for the lowlands on the far (leeward) side to be drier, since the winds arrive laden with less moisture. In addition, as the winds drop and warm, they acquire surface moisture in the new area.

b) Gentler slopes provide a greater surface upon which the moisture can fall and snow fields can form, and since the runoff travels away from the highland spine that forms the continental divide, these foothill regions generally receive more water than the side of the mountains with the more extreme drop. Correspondingly, the trend is toward less wasteland in these areas of gradual topography.

Unique Minerals

Once the land takes shape, the GM may wish to note the placement of valuable mineral deposits, notably precious or enchanted metals and gems. Naturally, these might include minerals from our own world, but the GM may wish to add additional forms which have peculiar qualities that add variety to a campaign: (1) hardness; (2) inherent magical or anti-magical power; (3) explosive instability; (4) extreme pliability; (5) awesome strength; (6) optical qualities; (7) sheer beauty; (8) ability to hold a sharp edge; etc. Acquisition of trade in these minerals can be an exciting campaign element.





15.1.4 THE WATER

When constructing a setting the GM must deal with both inland waters and the seas. The latter may dictate where the shape and location of the continent(s) is in certain situations, or they may simply fill the gaps between land masses already conceived. Inland waters, on the other hand, are less flexible, for they are invariably shaped by the land.

The following is a list of helpful guidelines for dealing with both realms of water.

Inland Water

a) Rivers naturally follow the landscape, ever in search of the lowest point, and always choosing the simplest route. All things being equal, water will travel in a direct line, but harder rock or higher ground will change things.

b) Water moves quicker when the incline over which it travels is steeper and/or where a large volume is forced through a narrow course. Fast-moving streams travel more directly than those that slumber, for they deposit less silt, erode the land about them quicker, and thereby carve deep channels which guide the water's course.

c) The slower the stream, the more sediment it deposits. Slow creeks and rivers tend to wind because they drop off silt which forms new obstacles and constantly causes a shift in the watercourse. Bends and pools in the stream channel occur, although eventually the erosive force of the water and the general need for a faster route to the sea act to wear away the bend's bank, creating a direct bypass cut. This constant action usually results in more fertile soil.

d) Lakes appear in a variety of places, although a few spots are particularly conducive to the formation of pools, notably the craters of extinct volcanoes and the finger-like troughs carved out by glaciers. Keep in mind, however, that natural lakes are rarer than one might think. Damming creates most lakes which are larger than big pools.

e) Freshwater lakes normally lie in temperate or cool locales, and receive a steady input of new water; most have an outlet which aids in circulation and prevents the buildup of too much salt.

f) Saltwater or briny lakes tend to lie in warmer regions where evaporation is quick and the water holds more salt. In addition, a body of water with too great an outflow or too little circulation will tend to accumulate more silt and a high salt concentration.

Seas

a) On a global style world which is analogous to Earth, ocean activity is tied to the rotation and atmospheric conditions. Surface currents normally follow the direction of prevailing winds, and the general flow (clockwise or counterclockwise) will be opposite to that found in the other hemisphere.

b) In the equatorial belt, trade winds and associated currents form their own pattern which acts to send wind and water to the opposite hemisphere.

c) As the air or water passes through cold latitudes its temperature drops and becomes denser. Precipitation may result. This cold will be carried to warmer areas of the world as the air or water circulates toward the warm latitudes; in time, warming sets in, and the heat is transferred.

d) Where currents are channeled through narrow passages, or where two major currents collide, the result is rough seas, with the associated whirlpools and undertows.

e) Tides result from a variety of forces, notably gravitational interaction between celestial bodies. Suffice it to say, there are equal numbers of high and low tides in a given day, and tidal variations are most extreme where a wide bay narrows rapidly as it cuts inland. These tides can rise and fall more than forty feet, isolating or joining land masses.

15.1.5 CLIMATE

Climatic forces shape the land and its inhabitants, and may go as far as to dictate activity. The following are some prominent and manageable aspects which the GM may wish to consider when setting up the weather patterns. Keep in mind that the distribution and nature of the plant and animal populations will be dependent on the interrelationship between land, water, and atmosphere. Also note that weather is a complex study of a vast number of factors. This simplification is intended to give a good working model for a campaign.

See Section 16.0 for more information on Climate.

15.2 THE SETTING AND ITS INHABITANTS

After a working model of the physical world is created, the GM should have a clear idea of the topography and climatic patterns pertinent to the campaign. This will provide the GM with a means to place the inhabitants according to their ecosystem.

Where the GM desires to break the pattern and place a species or race in an area not normally consistent with the given group's lifestyle, a few standard accounts might explain the unusual settlement: (1) migrations of the species have been accompanied by some unique adaptation; (2) the species is dormant during times when the new environment is not suited to their survival; (3) the species migrates between areas with the seasons; or (4) the species can survive in the new environment, but has only recently arrived and has not had time to adapt.

Since plant life is less mobile than the animals, and more often tied to the ecosystem, the GM should place the flora first. This will also provide a better framework for the construction of animal life, which is after all the focus of most adventures.

15.3 THE PLANTS

Since the food chains often begin with plants, all other life in those areas will be affected by the flora. Insects, birds, beasts, and higher beings will follow. In a game context, what is important is a basic idea of the area's vegetation, not necessarily individual species. Nonetheless, certain unique plants can make a campaign very rich, particularly those that can be valued because they are rare, recreational, dangerous, have medicinal properties, or provide the basis for the making of weapons.

We begin with a few tips on creating the basics, and then move on to some methods for making specific plants which add life to a campaign.

15.3.1 VEGETATION PATTERNS

When constructing a picture of vegetation distribution, categorization can be helpful, and will allow for a framework unto itself. The GM might wish to employ the following five vegetation patterns, mapping them out onto the newly-created physical world:

1) Tundra and waste (desert) land;

2) Grassland;

3) Mixed vegetation with grass;
- a) Scattered woodland and grass;
- b) Shrubs and grass;

4) Mixed vegetation without grass;
- a) Needle-leaf and broad-leaf tree mixes;
- b) Mixes of trees and shrubs;

5) Forest;
- a) Coniferous vegetation: cone-bearing plants, normally broad and needle-leaved evergreens;
- b) Broad-leaved deciduous vegetation;
- c) Broad-leaved evergreen vegetation.

Forests

a) **Cool areas:** the forests tend toward stands of (1) needle-leaved evergreens; (2) needle-leaved deciduous trees; or (3) mixes of the two evergreen varieties, all with little undergrowth. Except in the coldest areas, near polar reaches or along the highland tree lines, these trees are quite large and tall. Mature trees rise 100-200 feet and many exceed that height. Like other living things, trees tend to be get larger and bunch closer when they need to retain heat. In order to capture the less generous amounts of light, they assume tall profiles. When the temperature and winds become extreme, however, these same varieties grow low, spreading and intertwining, eventually forming a sort of carpet.

b) **Temperate regions:** the forests generally include a mix of broad-leaved deciduous and needle-leaved evergreen trees. Mature stands normally vary in height from 50-100 feet, and variety abounds. Undergrowth is moderate in the deep forest, and rather dense along the edges of clearings.

c) **Hot, humid locales:** broad-leaved evergreens predominate. Undergrowth is uniformly extensive, and the variety of plants in these regions is unparalleled. Trees thrive and take on a tall, lean profile in order reach the sunlight above the forest canopy. True "rain forests" may actually be composed of a distinct layers: undergrowth (up to 20'), stands of younger trees (to 50'), and mature trees which form the "roof" at a height of 80-150 feet.

d) **Hot, dry areas:** trees are relatively scarce and tend toward specialized varieties, or broad-leaved deciduous and, evergreen shrubs and scrub.

Other Vegetation

a) **In cold non-waste regions**, as one approaches the tree line or tundra, the trees get smaller and eventually give way to scattered broad-leaved evergreen shrubs. These get smaller as the locale gets more extreme, and dwarf varieties eventually predominate.

b) Lichens and grasses form **tundra** in very cold areas. Still colder areas that are not yet barren, are covered with tundra composed of moss and lichens. Root and soil structures in tundra areas make for a damp, spongy ground which is almost rock-hard in times of cold, since the water is frozen. In warm times this ground becomes a soft, cushiony carpet which is often swampy or bog-like.

c) Vegetation in **waste regions** is adapted to long periods of **dormancy**, broken by short spurts of explosive activity. When active these plants spread quickly and bloom with fervor.

d) **Warm waste areas** are often surrounded by belts of scattered broad-leaved deciduous dwarf shrubs.

15.3.2 SPECIFIC PLANTS

The following is a list of methods by which a GM can use specific plants to achieve added adventure.

a) **Healing Herbs:** Plants with medicinal value add flexibility to a campaign. Their existence enables a group of adventurers to acquire a mobile means of healing, giving them an alternative to hiring healing spell users. Such herbs also allow for a vast number of discrete cures, and ways to augment healing spells. Whole new adventures might center around their acquisition, and as commodities they add flavor to the economy. See Section !13.0 for a list of herbs.

b) **Valuable Plants:** Besides the simple practical varieties, certain woods and spices might be valued for unique aesthetic qualities such as taste or appearance. They might simply be rare. This adds an element akin to the injection of another precious metal or gem; trade in these plants becomes an economic factor, and might promote adventure.

c) **Dangerous Species:** Some plants may have deadly qualities, either as aggressive hunters in the wild or as passive killers which provide can poisons and the like.

d) **Other Plants of Practical Value:** Plants with qualities such as high tensile strength, hardness, or incredible flexibility can be used in the making of superior goods. Wood for bows and other weaponry can be precious to certain warriors. Enchanted plant stuffs can aid the spell user, be employed in the making of exceptional items, or used in religious rites.

15.4 THE ANIMALS

To generalize animal distribution in the way we approach plants is very difficult, for animals are by nature relatively mobile. As with other aspects of the world setting, categorization and plotting the types on maps will aid the GM to chart encounters with animals, and the way that the various cultures manipulate them.

The GM should take their own practical knowledge, including any material gleaned from this work, and decide on animal groups for the campaign. A good approach is to combine variations on known species with your own inventions. New animal families and species can be grouped according to ecosystem, diet, etc. For campaign purposes we provide some notes on how one might encounter animals in this world, as an example of how the GM can generalize his animal groups. This will allow for consistent placement, and a better approach to encounters in the wild.

The GM may also wish to make a chart detailing animal types, including the characteristics discussed below: *numbers, size, diet, herding or social instincts, and ease of domestication.*

Also important are: *armor type, defensive bonuses, concussion hits, average level, movement speed, attack quickness, attack patterns and methods, and any special abilities.*

Note: *See Creatures & Monsters for a compilation of animal statistics.*

15.4.1 WILD BEASTS

These are traditional animal species which have evolved in nature without any great interference from secondary powers. They lack enchanted form or ability and operate largely on the basis of instinct, and have a social structure, but no culture. The GM can chart their character and distribution based on a few basic patterns. In our world the generalizations that follow are applicable.

a) **Populations:** Land areas with moist, warm climates have more inhabitants—be they plants or animals, warm or cold blooded. These regions accommodate most of the species, and therefore a wide variation of sizes and shapes occur. PCs adventuring in these locales will have a high probability of encountering something, although most animals might not be threatening.

b) **Size:** Despite the fact that there are fewer species in cold regions of the world, the relatively rare encounters have a high probability of being with larger creatures. PCs will run into very few animals, but those they do find will usually be larger. This is due to the high proportion of warm-blooded beasts, animals best adapted for living in extreme temperatures. Warm-blooded animals generally get larger as the climate gets cooler, much as plants do. Their adaptation requires additional bulk; more fat and a higher ration of weight to surface area is needed. The reverse is true for cold-blooded land creatures, since their activity level is keyed to an externally regulated body temperature. Reptiles, insects, and other cold-blooded creatures are particularly susceptible to cool climates, and very few of these species live in these areas.

c) **Herding:** Herd animals or species which concentrate their populations tend to deplete the resources of a given area relatively quickly. They roam over a large territory, and although their herd(s) may be large, their overall population density is sparse. Encounters with these groups will normally occur in grassland regions, or in the cooler forests.

d) **Migrations:** Animals who live in harsh climates during the mild part of the year, migrate out when the weather gets bad. They head for similar climes elsewhere, and unless they can swim or fly, will generally travel only as far as is absolutely necessary. The GM should draw lines showing the course of this movement, particularly where it occurs on land.

(e) **Subsistence Patterns:** An animal group's means of survival should be noted, since an encounter with a carnivore (meat eater) will differ from one with an herbivore (plant eater). Some beasts (omnivores) will eat almost anything. Most animals, however, will flee unless they are unsatisfied predators or virtually starving. The GM should note the weather and any other extremes that could affect the food sources of local beasts. If the animals in a given area are very hungry PCs may be hard pressed for two reasons: (1) lack of game to hunt; and (2) dangerous game which may doing some hunting of their own.

(f) **Manipulation:** Certain animal types lend themselves to easy domestication or control. This is particularly true of more intelligent groups, animals who survive by both guile and instinct. These beasts are more efficient at gathering food, and often find time to play. They understand when submission is the wiser course. Survival or additional benefits may be gained by following or associating with a greater power, and smarter beasts will pursue this avenue more readily.

15.4.2 MONSTERS

Monsters are creatures with enchanted abilities or form. Some are alterations or mutations of wild beasts, and may owe their state to the interference of some Secondary Power. Although they are often smarter than wild beasts, they lack the cultural organization and identity of thinking beings. They should be charted separately, since they would normally have the ability to decide when and where to move and settle. In addition, monsters normally subsist off of plants or other animals, not vice versa.

Note: See *Creatures & Monsters for a compilation of monster statistics.*

15.4.3 THINKING BEINGS

Thinking beings—Men, Elves, Dwarves, Halflings, Orcs, Trolls and the like—are intelligent creatures which have both culture and social organization. The GM should chart these groups last, since they have the greatest freedom of choice and stand at the top of the food chain.

See Section 17.0 for more on Races and Cultures.

15.5 GEOGRAPHY GENERATION

This section permits the GM to construct geography during play, enabling him to allow travel into unprepared areas or deal with unpredictable situations. The section incorporates two sub-sections, one for topography and another for vegetation/water types. These are interrelated concepts affected by climatic patterns, so a listing of suggested assumptions regarding climate is also provided. (The assumptions are based on earth's circumference, axial tilt, and solar proximity.)

In many cases, the GM has a map which already details the factors of climate, topography, or vegetation, but fails to address one or two of the factors. In such a case, he should apply the known factors and roll on the sub-section appropriate to the factor he is attempting to determine. Otherwise, the sub-sections appear in the order of suggested use.

Remember that these sections only apply to unexplored/undocumented areas. For example, if a group comes out of the hills, reaches a coast, and desires to move onto a neighboring plain they spotted from the hills, no topography roll is necessary. A vegetation roll may still be in order, should the prior information be inconclusive with respect to this factor.

15.5.1 TOPOGRAPHY GENERATION

Topography generation is a six-step process determining:

1) coastline
2) coastal areas
3) mountain chains
4) foothill groups
5) river courses
6) other geographic features (e.g., plains, hills, and wetlands)

All reference points and movement are based on 5 mile diameter, hex-shaped areas (see diagram). When you move, you travel from the center of a hex to the center of an adjacent hex. When you search, you search either (a) all the adjacent hexes, or (b) the specific hex you move into.

Coastline

A coastline hex is part sea and part land. In order to reach a coast when traveling on open sea, roll to determine the nature of all adjacent hexes each time you move:

01-95	=	open sea
96-99	=	coastline
100	=	isolated isle/reef

In order to reach the coastline from the landward side, you must first enter a coastal area (see "coastal areas" below).

When you reach the coast from the land or the sea side, you should delineate the surrounding coastline. This involves making a roll for each of the hexes adjacent to a coastline hex, using a random process to develop a line of coastline hexes. Once you have determined the nature of all adjacent hexes, move to the next hex along the coastline (in whatever desired direction) and repeat the process (i.e., chart the hexes adjacent to the new area). Should a coastline hex be surrounded by water, you have a large coastal island.

Roll	01-50	51-100
Result	coastline	open sea hex

If the randomly generated coastline comes with 10 hexes (fifty miles) of a known coastline, connect the two points with a line of coastline hexes. This hex line, representing the mean intervening coastline, should be as direct as possible, although you may wish to alter it slightly so that its lay resembles that of the coastlines it joins. For instance, after tracing a straight line of hexes which connect the randomly generated coast to a documented coast, you may wish to make the line wind in and out (e.g., insert inlets or peninsulas, each no longer than 1 hex/5 miles).

Coastal Areas

The land adjacent to the coastline hexes composes coastal areas (see example diagram). This is a one hex (5 mile) wide band on the landward side of the coastline. Once the coastline is set, you should determine these areas.

Roll	01-90	91-100
Result	Coastal Area	River Valley (mouth/delta)

Mapping Mountains

Once the coastline and associated coastal areas are determined, you can begin locating nearby mountains. This process is simple. Make a closed percentile roll and halve it to determine how far **away** from the coast the mountains begin, using the following formula:

(5 mile) hexes = 1 + (1-50)

For instance, a roll of 73 is divided by two to yield 37 and 1 is added to derive 38. The mountains, then, begin 38 hexes or 190 miles from the coastline. As an optional rule, if you roll a 100 treat the first roll as open-ended and roll again (each successive roll being open-ended with a 100 result).

When the distance from the coastline is determined, you have a starting point for delineating the course of the given mountain chain. Then you proceed to delineate line of mountain or hill hexes paralleling the coast at the same distance, rolling for each hex in the line.

Roll	01-90	90-100
Terrain	Mountains	Hills

A "Hills" hex /area surrounded on either side by "Mountains" indicates a pass. Two consecutive "Hills" results means the end of the mountain chain.

Once you have a line of hexes denoting the chain, roll to determine the type of mountains.

Roll	01-60	61-100
Type	Faultblock	Folded

Section 2.1.3 has an explanation of the nature of these type of mountains. You should note, though, that the former has one steep face (with few foothills) and one gentle side (with a wide band of foothills). Roll to see which side is steepest:

01-75	=	side closest to sea
76-100	=	side farthest from sea

Folded mountains have less contrasting opposing faces (i.e., the foothills are roughly equal).

With the line of the chain and the type of mountain determined, roll to ascertain the width of the chain. Simply roll for each adjacent hex. If you get an"Mountain Edge" result, you have found the edge of the chain at that point. If not, continue to roll on the mountain terrain chart below. For instance, the result for the hex due east of that line indicates "Mountain Edge." At that point you have determined the eastern edge of the mountain range. The terrain in a mountain edge hex is part hills and part mountains, but treat it as mountains for purposes of vegetation/water type rolls, etc.

Roll	01-60	61-90	91-100
Terrain	Mountains	Mountain Edge	Other*

* 01-30 = hills; 31-60 = wetlands; 61-100 = plains (plateau)

Also note that the mountain chain normally cannot come closer that 2 hexes (10 miles) to any coastline (i.e., they cannot be in coastal areas). Should such a situation arise, roll; if the result is 100, the mountains proceed into the coastal area. Otherwise they stop.

Foothills

Along the mountain edge, you have a band of foothills. Make another roll to determine their width:

01-10	=	2 hexes (10 miles)
11-20	=	3 hexes (15 miles)
21-30	=	4 hexes (20 miles)
31-40	=	5 hexes (25 miles)
41-50	=	6 hexes (30 miles)
51-60	=	7 hexes (35 miles)
61-70	=	8 hexes (40 miles)
71-80	=	9 hexes (50 miles)
81-90	=	10 hexes (50 miles)
91-95	=	11-15 hexes (55-75 miles)
96-100	=	16-25 hexes (80-125 miles)

In the case of the edge along the steep face of fault mountains (only), a roll of 01-25 = 1 hex (15 miles); 26-75 = 2 hexes (10 miles); and 76-100 = 3 hexes (5 miles).

With the parameters of the foothills set, determine the terrain in foothill hexes.

Roll	01-90	91-95	96-100
Terrain	Hills	Plains	Wetlands

Charting Rivercourses

When you set the terrain in the coastal areas you determine the mouths of the rivers. Starting at these points, you can trace the course of each waterway. First you note the nearest mountain hex. Then, assuming you are in the hex (or hexes) at the river valley mouth, mark the two upriver hexsides closest to the given mountain hex and roll to see which hex(es) the river passes through:

Roll	01-47	48-94	95-98	99-100
Result	left hex	right hex	both hexes	headwater*

* 01-40 = river continues; 41-70 = river begins at spring; 71-100 = river begins at lake.

VEGETATION/WATER TYPE GENERATION CHART

When determining an area's vegetation or water character, make a preliminary roll (d100, not open-ended) to see if you need to consult the chart below. If the result is 01-50, the vegetation/water type is the same as that of the last hex examined. This process can be used to determine the character of large areas (e.g., all the plains in a given area) or to generate the vegetation/water in each hex a group of characters travels through. Should the roll be greater than 50, refer to the chart below.

	Current Topography						
Roll	**Coastline**	**Coastal Area**	**Plains**	**Hills**	**Mountains**	**River Valley**	**Wetlands**
01-20	M	P	P	D	C	F	F
21-30	M	P	P	D	C	F	L
31-40	H	D	Z	C	D	F	M
41-50	H	D	H	C	P	F	M
51-60	P	C	H	H	H	B	M
61-70	P	H	D	H	H	L	M
71-80	D	M	P	P	T	M	L
81-90	C	J	D	J	T	M	J
91-95	J	D	J	Z	Z	H	I
96-97	Z	M	Z	P	J	G	B
98-99	Z	J	Q	Q	G	I	J
100	B	B	L	Q	Q	H	G

Note: In extremely cold climes treat "H" results as "T" vion and "D" as "C" vegetation.

Key: B = Breaks/Wadis; F = Freshwater costs & banks; G = Glacier/snowfield; I = Islet/reef/atoll; L = Lake/river; M = Marsh/swamp; O = Ocean; Q = Oasis/isolated water sources; S = Saltwater shores/shallows; Z = Desert; C = Coniferous forest/taiga; D = Decidous/mixed forest; H = Heath/scrub/moor; J = Jungle/rain forest; P = Plains grassland/savanna; T = Tundra.

Once you determine which hex the river passes through, move to that hex and repeat the process. In this way, you will progress upriver until the river ends with a headwater result or the river reaches a mountain hex. Once the river enters a mountain hex on the steep side of fault-type mountain range it ends. When it enters any other mountain hex roll:

01-50 = river ends
51-100 = river continues

Should a river cross half the width of a folded-type mountain range it ends.

When a river reaches into two hexes you have a junction point of two rivers. Once this occurs, treat each river separately, using the same process to determine the course of each. Remember, however, that the rivers cannot pass through the same hex again..Should they end in adjacent hexes, the next roll must result in at least one intervening non-river hex (see diagram).

Other Geographic Features

Once you have charted the coastline, coast areas, mountains, foothills, and river valleys, you are ready to fill in the other terrain. Using the table below, you can determine the nature of these other areas.

CURRENT TOPOGRAPHY (area being left)

Roll	Plains	Hills	Wetlands
01-50	Plains	Hills	Plains
51-70	Plains	Hills	Wetland
71-95	Hills	Plains	Hills
96-100	Wetlands	Wetlands	Hills

Terrain Severity

The severity or specific nature of any terrain depends on circumstance. For random results, use the following chart to assign a terrain severity for each hex, regardless of terrain type. For instance, a roll of 93 for a plains hex would indicate that the terrain, although level plains, is extremely rough. You may describe it as rocky or full of sinkholes.

Roll	Severity
01-10	usually gentle
11-70	typical
71-90	rough
91-98	extremely rough
99-100	access to underground areas

Note: *Those using Creatures & Monsters or any setting modules from ICE will note that rough or extremely rough hills = "R" terrain (rough/rugged/rocky), while rough or extremely rough mountains = "A" terrain (alpine/high altitude).*



CLIMATE AND WEATHER

16.1 GENERAL CLIMATE AND WEATHER NOTES

Climatic forces shape the land and its inhabitants, and may go as far as to dictate activities in the environment. The following are some prominent and manageable aspects which the GM may wish to consider when setting up the weather patterns. Keep in mind that the distribution and nature of the plant and animal populations will be dependent on the interrelationship between land, water, and atmosphere. Also note that weather is a complex study of a vast number of factors. This simplification is intended to give a good working model for most campaigns.

a) **Temperature Curves:** Normally, cooler and temperate latitudes have a wider variety of seasons, and have more radical temperature shifts over the course of a year. As one moves into warmer reaches, the temperature curve gets flatter, with uniformly higher temperatures varying little from summer to winter.

b) **Prevailing Winds:** Winds have prevailing patterns which account for most of their travel. Each hemisphere has its own basic rule: one hemisphere will have generally clockwise wind prevailance, and the other counterclockwise.

c) **Polar and Equatorial Wind Patterns:** The prevailing wind patterns do not dominate the latitudes where temperatures are most extreme. In these areas, regional patterns dictate the flow. Dense *polar winds* consistently travel toward warmer environments, while the *trade winds* arising near the equator transfer air toward the opposite hemisphere.

d) **Weather Fronts:** Along the edges of the mid-latitude areas, warmer prevailing winds meet advancing polar air masses. The result is a disruption of the gentle cycle and the creation of a series of weather fronts which move off with the prevailing winds. These include: *cold fronts*, which bring cool, harsh storms; *warm fronts* and their associated light, warm summer showers; and *occluded fronts*, which spawn long wintery rains and snows.

e) **Moderating Forces:** Coastal areas enjoy relatively moderate temperatures. As one moves further inland, temperature trends become more extreme. Winds coming off the oceans generally bring moisture and moderation to the land. Cold winds arising out of nearby polar areas can be exceedingly dry, however, since the dense air cannot hold much moisture.

f) **Coastal Winds:** Land and water heat up at different rates, and along the seacoast the result is a constant shifting of local winds. Since land is composed of solids and is denser, it has a low heat capacity, and a given amount of heat will increase the temperature of a landmass much more than it would the sea. Thus, during summer, the land is cooler. Whichever area happens to be warmer will have ascending air masses and low pressure. Generally, the air from the cooler region will advance on the warmer zone (creating winds).

g) **Barrier Influences:** As noted above, as air rises it becomes cooler and denser. The result is condensation and then precipitation (because dense air cannot hold water very well). This process occurs in the case of air masses attempting to cross mountain ranges, and highland areas that stand in the path of wet (or reasonably moist) winds are well-watered. In most cases, the heaviest precipitation falls on the windward side, where the mountains are particularly high, and most or all the moisture falls before reaching the highest peaks. This leaves the leeward side drier, creating grasslands or even desert. Where the mountains are relatively low, particularly in warm latitudes, the rain may fall near or on the ridgeline and run off in both directions. This scenario also results in less of a temperature drop, and allows for a retention of life-giving water and provides for further rainfall elsewhere.

16.2 RANDOMIZING WEATHER PATTERNS

If a GM wants (or needs) to determine the weather for a given region, the following guidelines can be used. However, realize that the weather patterns generated in the following method should only be used for a relatively small region. Neighboring regions should have their own weather patterns (with gradual shifts in noticable patterns as one travels from one region to another).

The steps to determining weather on a given day are:

- Determine the high and low temperature
- Determine whether there is precipitation
- Determine the maximum wind speed for the day

16.2.1 ASSUMPTIONS

All of the weather patterns generated below assume that the region is in a cool temperate latitude (approximately 40° latitude from the equator) at sea level. Adjustments will be given for distances and altitudes. In addition, these guidelines presume a world mass somewhat equivalent to that of Earth; a year with four seasons (each approximately three months long); and a day of 24 hours. Finally, all data was originally derived from National Weather Service data and has been extrapolated and somewhat simplified for ease of use.

All discussions will presume a location 40° north of the equator. Most directions will have to be reversed if the location is south of the equator. Also, all measurements are in either Fahrenheit (for temperatures), feet (for altitude), or miles per hour (for wind speed).

16.2.2 SUNRISE AND SUNSET

The approximate sunrise and sunset times are shown below. Note that most fantasy worlds will not have the equivalent of Daylight Savings Time.



SUNRISE/SUNSET CHART

Month	Sunrise	Sunset
First Winter Month	7:15am	4:30pm
Second Winter Month	7:15am	5:00pm
Third Winter Month	7:00am	5:30pm
First Spring Month	6:15am	6:15pm
Second Spring Month	5:30am	6:45pm
Third Spring Month	4:45am	7:15pm
First Summer Month	4:30am	7:30pm
Second Summer Month	4:45am	7:30pm
Third Summer Month	5:15am	7:00pm
First Autumn Month	5:45am	6:15pm
Second Autumn Month	6:15am	5:15pm
Third Autumn Month	6:45am	4:45pm

In addition, the further north you travel, the later the sun rises and sets. For every 7° in latitude north of 40°, add 15 minutes to the times given above. Also, the further south you travel, the early the sun rises and sets. For every 7° south of 40°, subtract 15 minutes from the times given above. Above 60° north or south, there is a perpetual daylight.

East and West travel will also affect the sunrise and sunset. For each 4° travelled East, the times are 15 minutes earlier. For each 4° travelled West, the times are 15 minutes later.

16.2.3 TEMPERATURE

Each month of the year has an average temperature and a Variation Class. To determine the high temperature on any given day, do the following:

- Roll d100 (open-ended high) and look up the result on the Temperature Modification Chart.
- Add the resulting temperature modifier to the average temperature for the current month.

The same procedure is followed for the low temperature (except temperatures are subtracted from the average, rather than added).

Remember that the high temperature for the day will occur about one hour past the middle of the day and the low temperature for the day will occur about one hour before sunrise.

The predominant terrain and/or vegetation in the region also has an effect on the temperature of the region. Consult the Terrain Effects Chart for the modifier to temperatures.



HIGH TEMPERATURES CHART

Month	Avg High	Variation Class
First Winter Month	38	III
Second Winter Month	32	IV
Third Winter Month	38	II
First Spring Month	46	III
Second Spring Month	58	IV
Third Spring Month	69	IV
First Summer Month	79	III
Second Summer Month	81	II
Third Summer Month	81	I
First Autumn Month	74	II
Second Autumn Month	72	IV
Third Autumn Month	52	IV

LOW TEMPERATURES CHART

Month	Avg High	Variation Class
First Winter Month	33	V
Second Winter Month	32	V
Third Winter Month	30	IV
First Spring Month	38	IV
Second Spring Month	48	III
Third Spring Month	57	IV
First Summer Month	65	II
Second Summer Month	71	II
Third Summer Month	69	II
First Autumn Month	62	III
Second Autumn Month	52	IV
Third Autumn Month	42	IV

TERRAIN EFFECTS CHART

	Modifications To...		
Terrain	Temp	Precip Chance	Wind Speed
Rough/Hills	none	none	±5mph
Forests	-5°	none	-5mph
Jungle	+5°	+10%	-10mph
Swamp/Marsh	+5°	+5%	-5mph
Plains	none	none	+5mph
Desert	+10(day) -10(night)	-30%	+5mph
Mountains	-3 per 1000'	none	+5 per 1000'
Coastal	-5(cold) +5(warm)	+5%	+5mph
Sea	-10(cold) +5(warm)	+15%	+10mph

TEMPERATURE MODIFICATION CHART

Temp Mod	Variation Class I	II	III	IV	V
±1	01-25	01-16	01-12	1-10	01-05
±2	26-50	17-32	13-24	11-20	06-10
±3	51-75	33-48	25-36	21-30	11-15
±4	76-100*	49-64	37-48	31-40	16-20
±5	101-116*	65-80	49-60	41-50	21-25
±6	117-132*	81-96*	61-72	51-60	26-30
±7	133-148†	97-107*	73-84	61-70	31-35
±8	149-164†	108-118*	85-96*	71-80	36-40
±9	165-173†	119-129*	97-104*	81-90	41-45
±10	174-182†	130-140†	105-112*	91-100*	46-50
±11	183-199‡	141-151†	113-120*	101-106*	51-55
±12	200+‡	152-162†	121-128*	107-112*	56-60
±13	—	163-167†	129-136†	113-118*	61-65
±14	—	168-172†	135-144†	119-124*	66-70
±15	—	173-177†	143-152†	125-130*	71-75
±16	—	178-182‡	151-160†	131-136†	76-80
±17	—	183-187‡	159-168†	137-142†	81-85
±18	—	188+‡	169-172†	143-148†	86-90
±19	—	—	173-176†	149-154†	91-95
±20	—	—	177-180†	155-160†	96-100*
±21	—	—	181-184‡	161-163†	101-103*
±22	—	—	185-188‡	164-166†	104-106*
±23	—	—	189-192‡	167-169†	107-109*
±24	—	—	193+‡	170-172†	110-112*
±25	—	—	—	173-175†	113-115*
±26	—	—	—	176-178‡	116-118*
±27	—	—	—	179-182‡	119-121*
±28	—	—	—	183-185‡	122-124*
±29	—	—	—	186-188‡	125-127*
±30	—	—	—	189+‡	128-130*
±31	—	—	—	—	131-133†
±32	—	—	—	—	134-136†
±33	—	—	—	—	137-139†
±34	—	—	—	—	140-142†
±35	—	—	—	—	143-145†
±36	—	—	—	—	146-148†
±37	—	—	—	—	149-151†
±38	—	—	—	—	152-154†
±39	—	—	—	—	155-157†
±40	—	—	—	—	158-160†
±41	—	—	—	—	161†
±42	—	—	—	—	162†
±43	—	—	—	—	163†
±44	—	—	—	—	164†
±45	—	—	—	—	165†
±46	—	—	—	—	166†
±47	—	—	—	—	167†
±48	—	—	—	—	168†
±49	—	—	—	—	169†
±50	—	—	—	—	170†
±51	—	—	—	—	171‡
±52	—	—	—	—	172‡
±53	—	—	—	—	173‡
±54	—	—	—	—	174‡
±55	—	—	—	—	175‡
±56	—	—	—	—	176‡
±57	—	—	—	—	177‡
±58	—	—	—	—	178‡
±59	—	—	—	—	179‡
±60	—	—	—	—	180+‡

* The region is experiencing a record high or low temperature.
The following day's temperature modification roll has a modifier of +25.

† The region is experiencing severe high or low temperature.
The following day's temperature modification roll has a modifier of +50.

‡ The region is experiencing extreme high or low temperature.
The following day's temperature modification roll has a modifier of +75.

16.2.4 PRECIPITATION

The next step in determining the weather is to determine if there is any precipitation for the day. The chance for precipitation is the same for every day in a given month. The chance for precipitation is shown in the chart below. Follow these steps:

- Roll d100 (open-ended) and add the number in the Chance column of the Precipitation Chance Chart. If the result is over 100, there will be precipitation on this day. The type of terrain or vegetation may modify this roll (see the Terrain Effects Chart above).
- Roll d100 (not open-ended) and consult the Clouds column of the Precipitation Chance Chart. The result will determine the type of cloud cover on this day (remember that the roll has a +30 modifier if precipitation occurs on this day.

PRECIPITATION CHANCE CHART

Month	Chance	Cloud Cover*
First Winter Month	43%	01-25: Clear 26-55: Partly Cloudy 56+: Cloudy
Second Winter Month	46%	01-25: Clear 26-54: Partly Cloudy 55+: Cloudy
Third Winter Month	41%	01-20: Clear 21-53: Partly Cloudy 54+: Cloudy
First Spring Month	45%	01-26: Clear 27-45: Partly Cloudy 46+: Cloudy
Second Spring Month	43%	01-25: Clear 26-52: Partly Cloudy 53+: Cloudy
Third Spring Month	42%	01-24: Clear 25-52: Partly Cloudy 53+: Cloudy
First Summer Month	36%	01-22: Clear 23-67: Partly Cloudy 68+: Cloudy
Second Summer Month	33%	01-31: Clear 32-58: Partly Cloudy 59+: Cloudy
Third Summer Month	33%	01-31: Clear 32-63: Partly Cloudy 64+: Cloudy
First Autumn Month	33%	01-31: Clear 32-60: Partly Cloudy 61+: Cloudy
Second Autumn Month	36%	01-29: Clear 30-54: Partly Cloudy 55+: Cloudy
Third Autumn Month	40%	01-19: Clear 20-42: Partly Cloudy 43+: Cloudy

* If precipitation occurs, the cloud cover roll is modified by +30.

Type of Precipitation

If precipitation does occur, the type of precipitation must be determined. Roll d100 (not open-ended) and consult the Precipitation Type Chart. Note that some types of precipitation have minimum and/or maximum temperatures. If the high and/or low temperature(s) fall outside the indicated range, roll again.

In all cases, the GM should make sensible decisions about the weather generated. For example, if the result is a Monsoon generated for a desert mountain region, he should re-roll the result (or justify the weather through magical phenomena).

PRECIPITATION TYPE CHART

Roll	Precipitation	Min Temp	Max Temp
01-02	Blizzard, Heavy	—	10
03-05	Blizzard, Light	—	20
06-10	Snowstorm, Heavy	—	25
11-20	Snowstorm, Light	—	35
21-25	Sleetstorm	—	35
26-27	Hailstorm	—	65
28-30	Fog, Heavy	20	60
31-38	Fog, Light	30	70
39-40	Mist	30	—
41-45	Drizzle	25	—
46-60	Rainstorm, Light	25	—
61-70	Rainstorm, Heavy	25	—
71-84	Thunderstorm	30	—
85-89	Tropical Storm	40	—
90-94	Monsoon	55	—
95-97	Gale	40	—
98-99	Hurricane or Typhoon	55	—
100	Special Weather	—	—

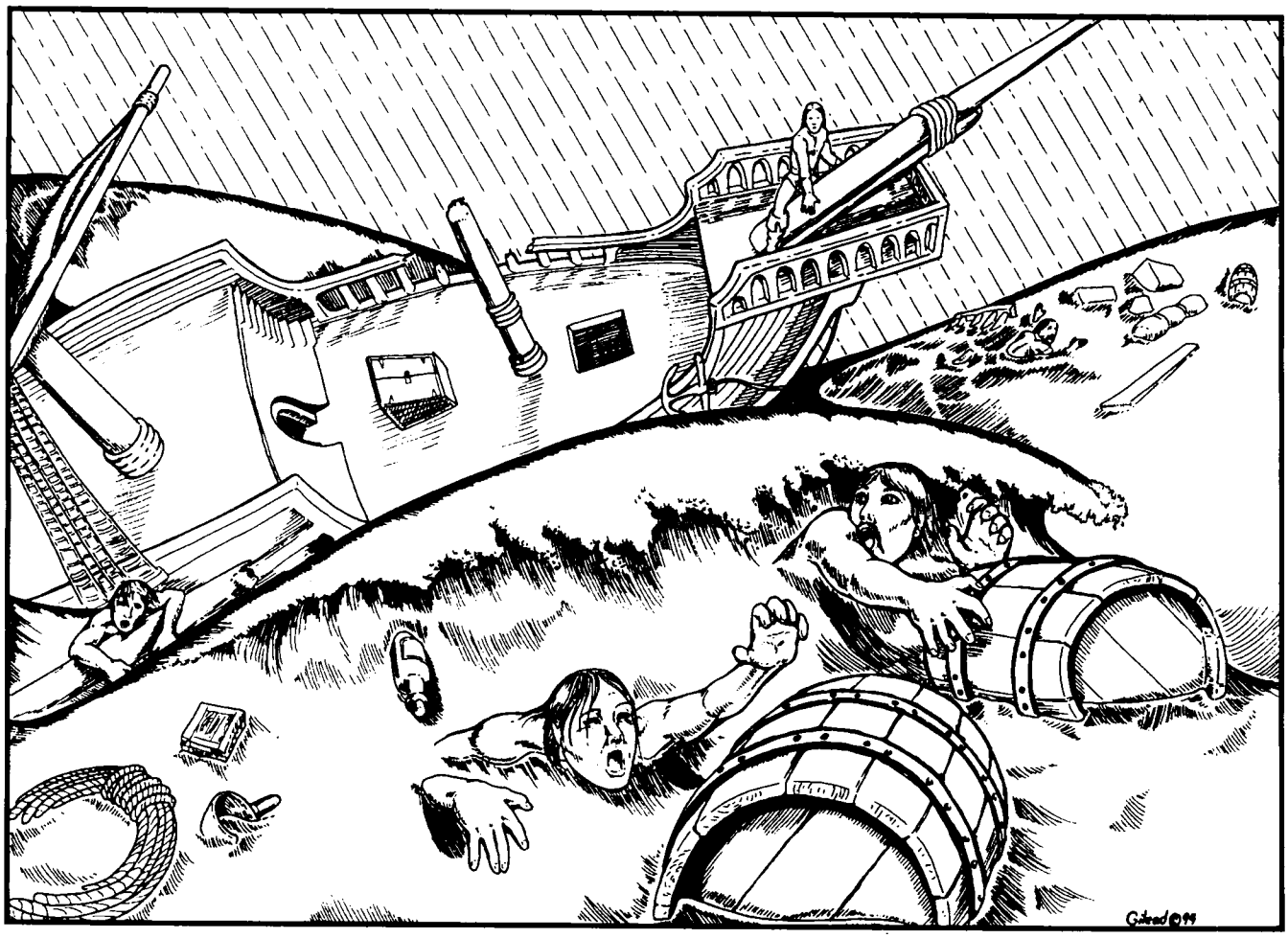
If a Special Weather Result is generated, the GM should have some unusual natural phenomena occur (e.g., an earthquake, a volcano exploding, etc.).

Precipitation Start Time

To determine when in the day the precipitation begins, roll d100 (not open-ended) and consult the chart below.

PRECIPITATION START TIME CHART

Roll	Time	Roll	Time
01-04	1am	51-55	1pm
05-08	2am	56-60	2pm
09-12	3am	61-64	3pm
13-16	4am	65-68	4pm
17-20	5am	69-72	5pm
21-24	6am	73-76	6pm
25-28	7am	77-80	7pm
29-32	8am	81-84	8pm
33-36	9am	85-88	9pm
37-40	10am	89-92	10pm
41-45	11am	93-96	11pm
46-50	12pm	97-100	12am



Duration

The next step in determining precipitation is to determine how long the precipitation will last. Perform the following steps:

- Roll d100 (open-ended high). Modify this roll according to the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I. If the modification from the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I takes the roll above 95 (i.e., 96 or higher), make a second roll and add it to the first (this second roll is also modified according to the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I. Continue this process until the result of any single modified roll is less than 96.
- Determine the type of duration for this type of precipitation (this can be found on the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I).
- Index the modified roll with the type of duration on the chart below to determine how long the precipitation will fall.

Note the starting time for the precipitation and then add on the duration of the precipitation. If the weather phenomena continues past midnight, do not check for precipitation for the next day (though cloud cover should still be checked–treat as if precipitation occurred on that day).

PRECIPITATION DURATION CHART

Roll	Short	Medium	Long
0 or less	0.5	1	0.5
01-08	1	2	1
09-16	2	5	1
17-24	3	8	1
25-32	4	10	2
33-40	5	13	2
41-48	6	16	3
49-56	7	18	3
57-64	8	21	4
65-72	9	24	4
73-80	10	26	5
81-88	11	29	5
89-96	12	32	6
97-112	14	37	8
113-128	16	42	9
129-144	18	48	10
145-160	20	53	11
161-176	22	58	12
177-192	24	64	14
193-216	27	72	16
217-240	30	80	18
241-264	33	88	20
265+	36	96	25

Note: Short and Medium durations are measured in hours. Long durations are measured in days.

Number of Inches

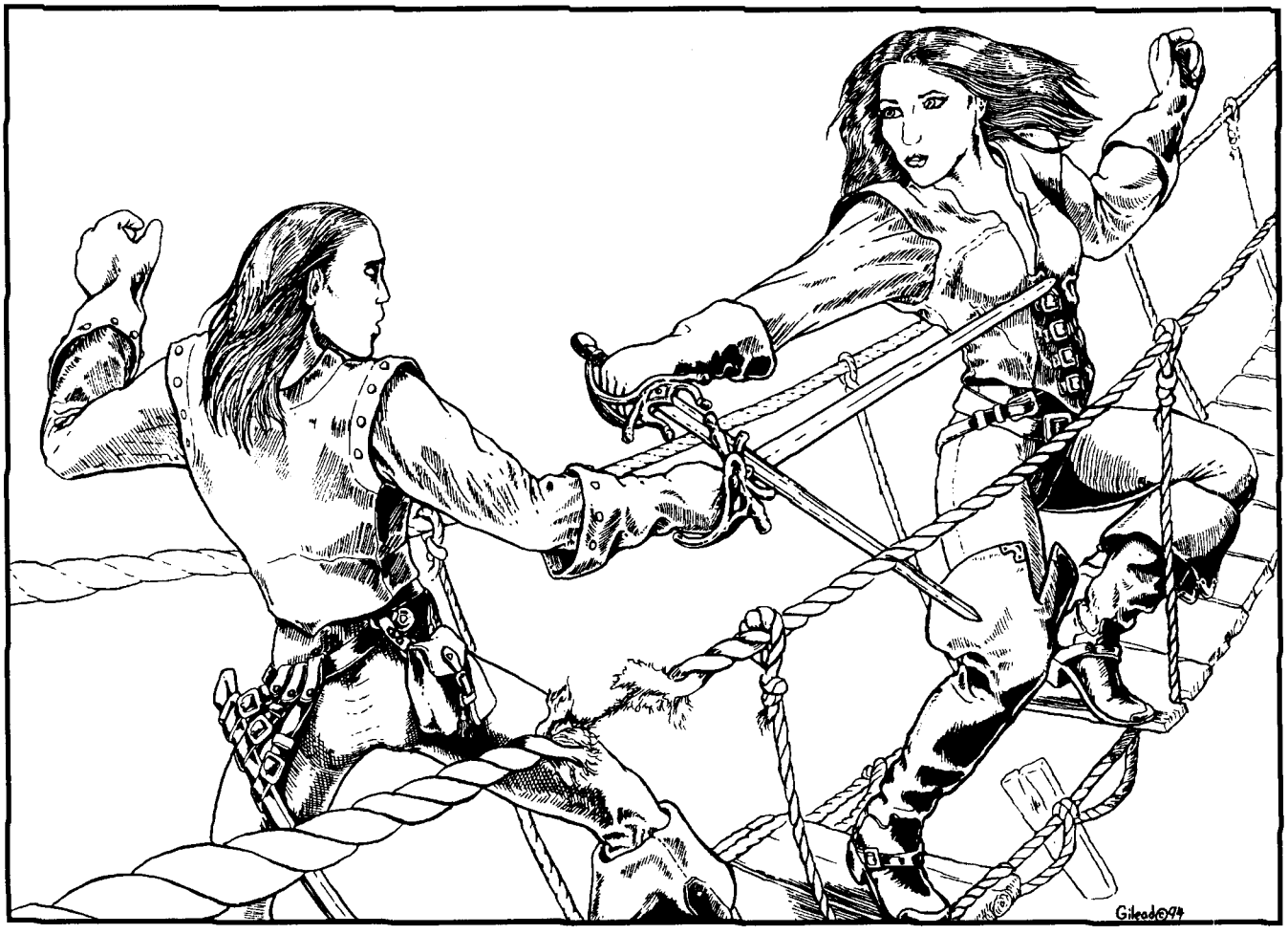
Once the duration of the precipitation is determined, the number of inches of precipitation must be determined. Perform the following steps:

- Roll d100 (open-ended high). Modify this roll according to the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I. If the modification from the Precipitation Information Chart takes the roll above 95 (i.e., 96 or higher), make a second roll and add it to the first (this second roll is also modified according to the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I. Continue this process until the result of any single modified roll is less than 96.
- Determine the type of inches for this type of precipitation (this can be found on the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I).
- Index the modified roll with the type of inches on the chart below to determine how long the precipitation will fall.

PRECIPITATION INCHES CHART

Roll	Light	Heavy	Prolonged
0 or less	<0.5	1	1
01-05	0.5	1	1
06-10	1	3	1
11-15	1.5	5	2
16-20	2	6	2
21-25	2.5	8	3
26-30	3	10	3
31-40	4	13	4
41-50	5	16	5
51-60	6	20	6
61-70	7	23	7
71-80	8	26	8
81-90	9	30	9
91-100	10	33	10
101-120	12	40	12
121-140	14	46	14
141-160	16	53	16
161-180	18	60	18
181-200	20	66	20
201-230	23	76	23
231-260	26	86	26
261+	29	96	29

Note: Light and Heavy precipitation is measured in inches. Prolonged precipitation is measured in inches per day.



16.2.5 WIND SPEED

The major influence on wind speed is the type of precipitation for the day (though terrain and/or vegetation are important as well). To determine the top wind speed for the day, do the following:

- Roll d100 (open-ended high). Modify this roll according to the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I.
- Index the modified roll and the type of wind (determined from the Precipitation Information Chart–Part I) on the Wind Speed Chart (below).
- Modify this wind speed as indicated in the Terrain Effects Chart.

The result is the top speed of the wind for this day. For Storm Winds, it is presumed that the wind speed generated is the average wind speed for the day. There will be occassional gusts that are stronger.

WIND SPEED CHART

Roll	Light	Heavy	Storm
0 or less	0(calm)	1	1
01-05	1	2	2
06-10	2	5	4
11-15	3	8	6
16-20	4	11	8
21-25	5	14	11
26-30	6	17	14
31-35	7	20	17
36-40	8	23	20
41-45	9	26	24
46-50	10	29	28
51-55	11	32	32
56-60	12	35	36
61-65	13	38	39
66-70	14	41	42
71-75	15	44	45
76-80	16	47	48
81-85	17	50	50
86-90	18	53	52
91-95	19	56	54
96-100	20	59	56
101-110	21	63	60
111-120	22	67	65
121-130	23	71	70
131-140	24	75	80
141-150	25	79	90
151-160	26	83	100
161-170	27	87	115
171-180	28	91	130
181-190	29	95	145
191-200	30	100	165
201-220	31	105	185
221-240	32	110	205
241-260	33	115	230
261-280	34	120	255
281+	35	125	300

Note: Wind speed is measured in miles per hour.

16.2.6 CONCLUDING NOTES

The Precipitation Information Chart–Part II contains further information that can be used during play (modifiers to Awareness skills, chance of getting lost, etc.).



PRECIPITATION INFORMATION CHART–PART I

Weather or Phenomena	Duration Type	Duration Mod.	Inches Type	Inches Mod.	Wind Type	Wind Speed Modifier
No Phenomena	—	—	—	—	Light	-10
Blizzard, Heavy	Medium	-5	Heavy	+5	Storm	+60
Blizzard	Medium	+10	Heavy	+5	Heavy	+30
Snowstorm, Heavy	Medium	+5	Heavy	-5	Heavy	-20
Snowstorm, Light	Medium	-15	Light	+10	Heavy	-25
Sleet Storm	Short	-15	Light	-35	Heavy	-20
Hailstorm	Short	-30	special	special	Heavy	-10
Fog, Heavy	Short	+25	—	—	Light	+0
Fog, Light	Medium	-5	—	—	Light	-25
Mist	Medium	-20	—	—	Light	-25
Drizzle	Short	+10	Light	-45	Light	+0
Rainstorm, Light	Short	+45	Light	-20	Light	+0
Rainstorm, Heavy	Short	+30	Light	+20	Heavy	-10
Thunderstorm	Short	-20	Light	+0	Heavy	-10
Tropical Storm	Long	+0	Prolonged	-5	Heavy	+30
Monsoon	Long	+80	Prolonged	+25	Storm	+0
Gale	Long	+0	Prolonged	+10	Storm	+30
Hurricane or Typhoon	Long	+5	Prolonged	+20	Storm	+100

Note: — = Not applicable

Hailstorms: Hailstorms do not have normal type of precipitation. When a hailstorm is generated, rolled d100 (open-ended) and divide by 100 to determine the average size of the fail (in inches).

PRECIPITATION INFORMATION CHART–PART II

Weather or Phenomena	Move Mod.	Awareness Mod.	Tracking Mod.	Direction Mod.
No Phenomena	—	—	—	—
Blizzard, Heavy	-85	-100	np	-50
Blizzard	-75	-90	-40	-35
Snowstorm, Heavy	-50	-50	-25	-20
Snowstorm, Light	-25	-25	-10	-10
Sleet Storm	-25	-25	-10	-5
Hailstorm	-25	—	-10	-10
Fog, Heavy	-75	-100	-60	-50
Fog, Light	-50	-75	-30	-30
Mist	—	—	-5	—
Drizzle	—	—	-5/hour	—
Rainstorm, Light	—	—	-50/hour	—
Rainstorm, Heavy	-25	-25	-50/hour	-5/hour
Thunderstorm	-50	-25	-50/hour	-10
Tropical Storm	-75	-50	np	-30
Monsoon	-75	-75	np	-30
Gale	-75	-75	np	-20
Hurricane or Typhoon	-75	-75	np	-30

Note: — = No modification.

Movement Mod.: Movement Modifiers apply to all Moving Manuever rolls. GMs may also wish to apply this modifier to any manuever that requires Agility; these penalties are in addition to other penalties.

Awareness Mod.: Modifiers to Observation and Alertness rolls (and other Awareness rolls as the GM deems appropriate).

Tracking Mod.: Modifiers to Tracking attempts (to be used in place of the Awareness Mods. above). np=Not Possible in this weather type (the GM may wish to institute a -200 penalty instead of disallowing the attempt).

Direction Mod.: This modifier should be applied to any attempts at Direction Sense (i.e., people become lost easier in some kinds of weather).

CULTURES AND RACES

After a working model of the physical world is created, the GM should have a clear idea of the topography and climatic patterns pertinent to the campaign. This will provide the GM with a means to place the inhabitants according to their ecosystem.

Where the GM desires to break the pattern and place a species or race in an area not normally consistent with the given group's lifestyle, a few standard accounts might explain the unusual settlement: (1) migrations of the species have been accompanied by some unique adaptation; (2) the species is dormant during times when the new environment is not suited to their survival; (3) the species migrates between areas with the seasons; or (4) the species can survive in the new environment, but has only recently arrived and has not had time to adapt.

17.1 RACES

Thinking beings—Men, Elves, Dwarves, Halflings, Orcs, Trolls and the like—are intelligent creatures which have both culture and social organization. The GM should chart these groups last, since they have the greatest freedom of choice and stand at the top of the food chain.

The form and biological/psychological mechanisms associated with these groups are legion. For game purposes, common sense and one's own experience is the best tool for dealing with these complexities. Some generalizations, however, will be helpful for creating a placement of humanoid groups.

a) **Body types** are often keyed to the area where a particular group developed. Unlike most mammals, humans perspire all over their body surface, and lack a complete covering of body hair. The result has been a unique tie between a group's body surface to weight ratio and the surrounding climate. Cold areas produce compact or stocky physiques with a low ratio, warmer areas are populated with thinner folk who have a large surface area from which to perspire. The former (colder) groups also tend to be short, the latter (warmer) tall.

b) **Human coloration** can also be linked to the region where a race took shape.

In hot areas there is a tremendous abundance of sunlight, and the direct rays deliver large amounts of ultraviolet radiation. Too much of this radiation results in tissue damage, so the skin develops a dark, protective coloration which limits the amount of ultraviolet light that penetrates the surface. Therefore, the hotter the region, the stronger the tendency toward dark skinned races, with the associated dark eye and hair pigmentation.

In cold locales the sun's rays strike at a steep angle, allowing less radiation to reach the surface. This results in a relative scarcity of ultraviolet radiation; and therefore presents a danger of too little vitamin D being produced by the body, since ultraviolet light stimulates this activity. To combat this problem, the body develops little coloration. These races have an extremely light complexion, and red or blond hair. Noticeable tanning may not occur among some of these groups, or if it does, it may take the form of freckling.

Temperate regions produce a variety of groups whose coloration falls in between these extremes. Those that must deal with lengthy hot and sunny seasons may have an olive or reddish yellow pigmentation, and/or tan quickly and thoroughly.

c) **The GM should construct a map showing the origin and movement of the races.** This will produce a picture of how the groups originally looked and developed culture before taking root in their present homes. The tendency of coloration and body type to follow a nation's setting will naturally be blurred as they move about, since contrary adaptation may take thousands of years, but it will help explain certain cultural and linguistic ties. Most importantly, it will allow for a more vibrant, living fantasy world.

Since PCs and NPCs usually are social beings, and culture is affects their manner as much as biological drive, we will dwell on the character of certain societies. After all, they are easier to explain and chart in game terms than complex biological/psychological processes.

17.2 THE CULTURES

When managing a large number of thinking beings, the GM should follow the usual creative pattern: work from the general to the specific. The biological nature of a species is probably the most basic of characteristics and should be dealt with first. Once the physical elements are clear, the next step is an analysis of the individual societies, the cultures.

Cultures are crucial to a good campaign for a number of reasons. They enable the GM to (1) visualize the way of life of any given place; (2) create specific constructs quickly and in a consistent manner; (3) formulate patterns of inter-society interaction such as trade or conflict; (4) develop underlying motivations and obvious features and mannerisms for NPCs; and (5) allow for richer PC backgrounds.

Cultural peculiarities are nearly infinite, and here a thorough anthropological analysis would be ridiculous, so we will concentrate on the principal elements that should be considered in a campaign, together with some helpful parameters.

A culture is an ever-changing organism which adapts to the setting over time. Thus, the GM should take into consideration all the factors discussed above when noting the effects of biology and the environment on the individual society's character. A single large chart incorporating the game's cultures and some or all of the elements enables the GM to summarize a tremendous number of areas quickly. Here is a list of important elements:

a) **Physical resources.** What a culture can rely upon given its location.

b) **Subsistence Patterns.** How a society feeds itself.

c) **Values and kinship Structure.** The norms a society holds dear, and the manner it organizes its family structures (e.g., child rearing, inheritance, and filial loyalty).

d) **Language.** The way a group thinks and communicates.

e) **Religion, myths, and historical experience.** How a people view themselves, their past, and their future, paying particular attention to their traumatic past, superstitions, and fundamental faith (e.g., gods).

f) **Technology.** The way a technology manages and exploits its resources to produce a specific living standard.

g) **Class specialization**. The way a society is organized, and the classes that compose the whole.

h) **Art, Architecture, and Symbolism.** The ways a society creates images and expresses itself in an abstract or three dimensional manner.

i) **Politics and warfare.** How a society makes decisions concerning internal and external affairs. The way warfare is waged.

j) **Peculiar elements of a society.** Unique factors which might affect the game, such as time conceptualization and calendars, or the use of magic outside of the religious or political arena.

17.3 BUILDING CULTURES

The points below reflect examples of the sort of analysis which helps the GM give a culture life. Each element interrelates with all the others, but the material is simplified and is ordered for purposes of convenience.

17.3.1 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

A culture is naturally limited by the tools it possesses, and the locale in which a people settles is the most important determinant of a society's assets. Therefore, the GM should first take a look at the natural resources available to the culture and, ideally, locate them on a reference map.

a) **Noticeable raw materials**. Note the obvious accessible resources: soil, open water, surface stone, wood, ore veins, etc.

b) **Hidden assets**. Determine what hidden resources lay within the locale, notably rich subsurface deposits, isolated stands of trees, obscure waters, and inconspicuous or innocuous natural riches or sources of power. Figure out how difficult it might be to reach such resources.

c) **Neighboring assets**. Look into resources and goods that might come from neighboring areas, and note how difficult it might be to obtain such assets.

17.3.2 SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS

Given the physical resources of an area, the GM gets a pretty clear picture of how the society exploits the land for food and other basic necessities. First determine if the land is capable of feeding a population, and what the limits might be for groups of the desired technological level. Use the world map as a cross-reference, and make a notation beside the group's name.

a) **Hunter/gatherers (H/G).** These groups rely on big game for food, have low population densities, and exist in a nomadic or semi-nomadic state. Extreme temperatures, vicious terrain, and/or poor soil discourage any form of agriculture. Bands or tribes may have distinct hunting circuits and therefore establish vague territorial boundaries. Urbanization is virtually nil, although certain specific sites may be sacred, and the focus of periodic societal gatherings. High protein meat diets are supplemented with any available nuts, fruits, berries, and occasionally fish. Wild grains are rarely used.

The average group size is normally limited to 25-50 people, and the territory is limited by the availability of water, wild foods, and game, and the overall proximity of these staples to each other. Population density varies from .05 to 10 people per square mile.

Men normally do the hunting because the mobility requirement conflicts with child-bearing. Women usually gather supplemental foodstuffs, an often arduous task that accounts for up to seventy percent of the group's nutritional intake. As with most extremely mobile groups, few old or weak people survive for any length of time (e.g., they may perceive their presence as a burden and wander off to die). In addition, possessions are usually limited to what one can comfortably carry.

b) **Slash and burn agriculturalists (S/B).** These folk rely on hardy yet primitive vegetables, mostly grains and tubers. Often poor soil, harsh climates, steep grades, or dense foliage prevent a society from exploiting the land any more efficiently. Farming revolves around the clearing of an area by slashing out large foliage obstacles and burning off the remainder. Normally one crop is harvested per year, and the land is again cleared by burning. Since the soil is quickly exhausted, movement to new cultivated areas is frequent. Coarse grasses replace the cleared forest in the abandoned fields, and the replenishment of the trees takes decades or centuries. Fishing and gathering may supplement the diet. The population density varies from 1 to 20 people per square mile.

c) **Herders (H)**. Herding peoples survive by supplementing a modest agricultural base with meat and dairy products taken from goats, sheep, cattle, and the like. Generally, the relatively small parcels of fertile soil are reserved for cropland or gardens, while the less arable territory is given over to the herds. Although the fertile land is provided with adequate fertilizer and is depleted rather slowly, overgrazing can exhaust the limited foliage elsewhere. Therefore, large areas are needed for the herds, since some rotation of the animals is required.

Seasonal movements between lowland and highland pastures occur on occasion and, serve to counter soil depletion and subsequent erosion. Mobility can also conquer the problems of drought and famine, which can devastate the animal-based food supply. Unfortunately, it is harder to hide from disease, and a herding group can suddenly find itself without food, should their flocks contract a severe illness. The people's proximity to their animals also makes them more susceptible to contagious disease. Herder population densities vary from 3 to 40 people per square mile.



d) **Fisherfolk (F)**. Fishermen may supplement their diet by gathering or gardening. Normally these folk live on islands, beside the coast, or along rich watercourses, and find that they can get most of their nutrition from fish, shellfish, sea mammals, and other related delicacies. Some of these societies are akin to hunters and gatherers, and move periodically as a result of weather or the flow of food sources. Others live a more sedentary existence, usually in comfortable seaside spots. This sort of subsistence produces population densities between .5 and 50 people per square mile.

e) **Mixed economies (M)**. These groups emphasize rotational farming often yield large amounts of food, mostly grains and vegetables. Modest amounts of meat, dairy products, and fish round out the diet. Such societies possess large tracts of arable soil, and devote their surplus land and harvests to providing for animals, or storage for future use. In these areas, population density varies from 10 to 100+ people per square mile.

17.3.3 VALUES AND KINSHIP

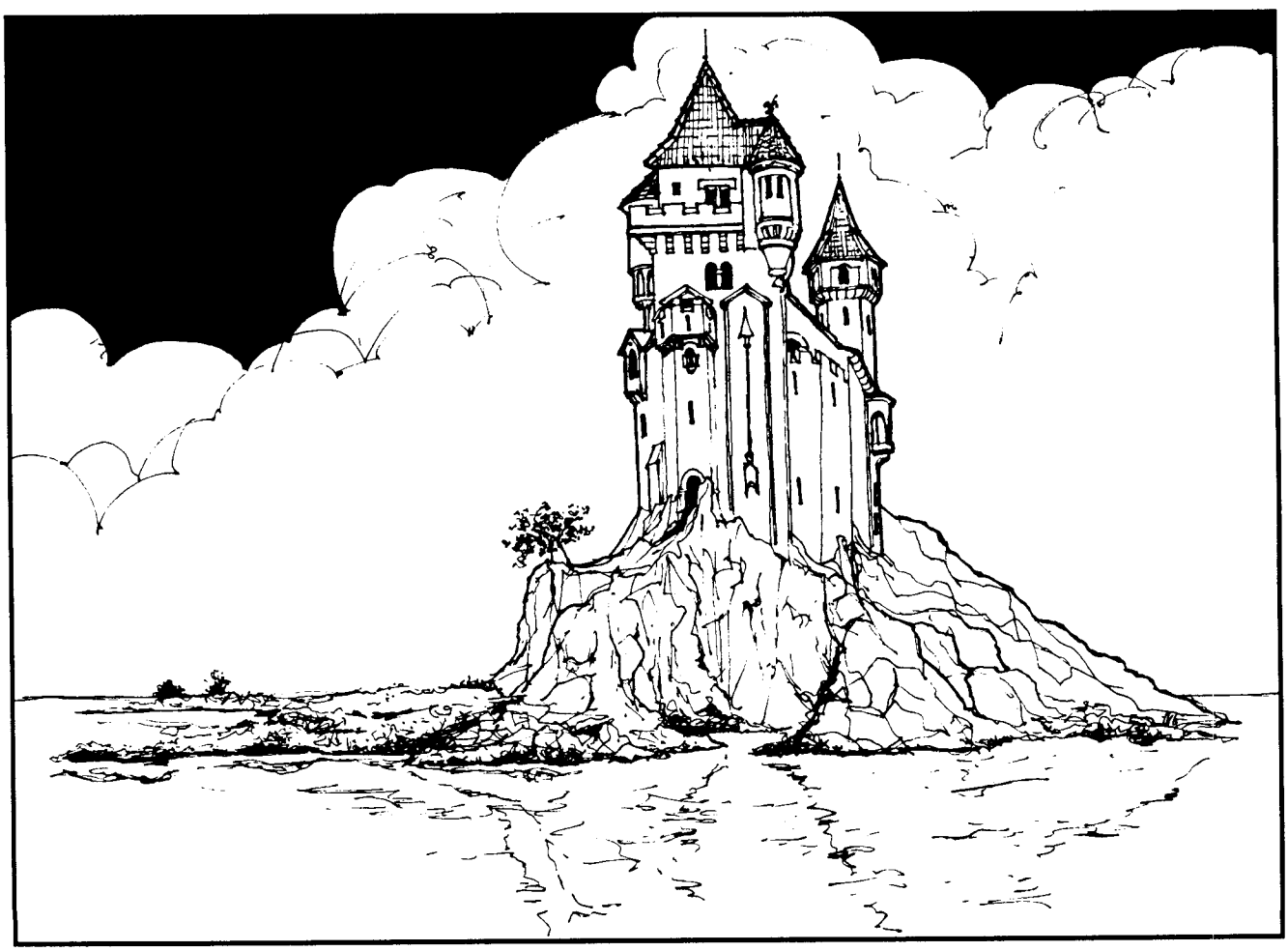
Given the physical setting and the way a society feeds itself certain values become norms, standards by which they act. These norms help order a group; they give the culture an identity. Many are directly related to survival and therefore the way people gather their food, while others are tied to the culture's historical experience and may reach back to a time long forgotten and to places since abandoned. Since these behavior-governing standards give birth to formal law and are in themselves informal law, the GM should take care to keep them consistent with the other aspects of the society. People born of a culture have norms burned in their psyche.

One important pattern of values centers around kinship, the family structure of a society. The GM should simply note what the cultural trend is so that there is a picture of authority, ownership of property, child rearing, and inheritance. In this way PCs entering a given area may encounter values which are clearly defined, but totally foreign. This can provide the beginning for a number of adventure situations. What follows are examples from our world:

a) **Matrilineal (Mat).** In matrilineal societies, the lineage and name is traced through the female line. Women often live in a household without their mates; instead, their brothers run the house and raise their sister's children. The rulers of the society may be women and inheritance, wealth, and prestige are typically concentrated in the hands of the female heads of houses. Women frequently have a number of consorts. Strangely enough, these groups are often the most conflict prone and warlike.

b) **Patrilineal (Pat)**. Patrilineal peoples trace their lineages through the male line. Men usually form the ruling class, and inheritance passes through specific males. Usually the men marry one or more women, an act akin to an exchange of wealth . Females who relocate to the husband's household often bring a dowry.

c) **Bilateral (Bil).** Bilateral folk trace kinship through either the male or female line, and inheritance and property ownership is also flexible.



17.3.4 LANGUAGE

Language bonds groups linked in the far distant past but now separated by distance and lifestyle. This is perhaps the most crucial element for constructing cultures, since language is indicative of how a people thinks and expresses its thoughts. Common language roots produce a related pattern of thought, and manifestations of this tie can appear in the way people act or in the objects they produce.

The first thing the GM should do when dealing with this element is to construct a language tree showing the original tongues and all their offspring. Ideally, this will be a drawing with lines representing the steps along the families' branches. This gives the GM a picture of what languages are related and how closely; the more steps along the branches between two tongues, the further apart their ways. Should two languages derive from altogether separate families, the associated cultures normally have tremendous difficulty in communicating and understanding each other.

A society's setting and subsistence patterns act to affect language over time. After all, an experience with something gives insight into its details, and new words and phrases are adopted to explain the specific concept. Cultures with no like experience might have no word or only a general word for the idea. In such a case, the details might escape them, making peripheral ideas hard to explain.

The following rough methods can help the GM construct the basic pattern of a language, and might spawn more detailed vocabulary and grammar should the need arise. One or more charts with headings and columns covering these points prove invaluable.

a) **Language tree**. Draw up a language tree keeping in mind the place where the base tongue originated, and noting the type of culture that first employed it. That setting and associated lifestyle should affect the way the language family was first conceived.

b) **Mapping tongues**. Assign the languages to specific cultures located on your world/campaign map. Those whose lifestyles are similar and/or intended to be related in race, spirit or locale might use related tongues.

c) **Dialects**. Then connect each tongue's linguistic subgroupings (dialects or archaic tongues) to segments of the society. Certain classes and isolated sub-cultures often embrace their own dialect.

d) **Literacy.** Based on the society's technological level, note whether there is any form of writing, and to what extent it is employed. Distinguish between differences found in the written and spoken words, accounting for the various dialects and any forms of ceremonial or shorthand (cursive) writing.

e) **Writing forms**. Note the writing form of major literate language groups. Consider whether they use pictographs, abstract symbols to express whole concepts, a syllabic alphabet, a phonetic alphabet, etc. A sample graphic might help.

f) **Sounds.** Give each major language groups some unique features, such as the sue of certain consonant or vowel sound combinations to express specific concepts. Note how plurals might be formed, or words combined.

g) **Vocabulary and grammar**. Then embark on specifics, such as the vocabulary or grammar of a given dialect. Keeping in mind the overall scheme of the language family, use a few basic foundations, such as a series of "root words" to tie together other words expressing similar or vaguely related concepts.

Remember, in terms of game play communication may be the key to survival in certain cases, and a number of language families and sub-groups can allow for a tremendous variety of campaign situations. A simple misunderstanding may produce a fight or a friendship where none is intended.

17.3.5 RELIGION, MYTHS, AND HISTORY

The GM might wish to sketch out the past movements of a people. This shows where the cultural identity was conceived and born, and what sort of experiences the society enjoyed in the past. Just as in the journey of an individual, the travels of a society shape its views.

It also affects its history and myths, the tradition and religion. The following interrelationship can then be considered or used.

a) **Cosmology and deities**. Develop the culture's god or pantheon of deities, if any. Remember that the world's real god(s) may differ significantly from those who command allegiance from a given society. Take the true cosmology—specifically the god or gods, the demigods, etc.—and note how the particular society views them. Their manifestations are dependent on cultural experience. Some gods will be revered more than others because of cultural need or prejudice (e.g., societies always at war elevate their war-gods, while those struggling with crops may hold fertility deity preeminent). In addition, the character of the gods will be viewed uniquely, for some will be considered benevolent and some malevolent; others might be merged or given split personalities.

b) **Traditions**. Construct an oral and/or written tradition. Given the society's real past and the way it views the world and its gods, form a picture of its peculiar myths and history. In many cases these blend together to form one story, while in others a line is drawn. Overlapping may be evident. Whatever the situation, however, these tales will have some importance to the way a culture evolves and operates. They can provide varying motivations, and allow the GM to give the PCs something to act upon that can be utterly false, absolutely true, or anywhere in between.

c) **Rites and ritual**. Formulate rituals and patterns of religious activity. A society's traditions, coupled with its everyday manner of living, give birth to rituals and spiritual practices. Look at the way the people live, what they value and concentrate on, and use these emphases to provide a foundation for rituals. Normally, religion will glorify or accentuate these elements of everyday importance. Then, blend in the way the gods are perceived to affect these ways of living, and inject their influence into the rituals. In some cases they can be the principal actors; in others they well might be bit players.

d) **Institutions and clergy.** Construct any religious hierarchy and/or class. Once the GM understands what a society's traditions and religion emphasize, and what rituals are considered crucial, he/she can get a picture of what sort of people are needed to perpetuate these views and practices. At this point, simply develop a full or part-time clergy to manage the culture's religious needs. Theocracies merge their clergy and politicians into one class, while societies ruled by outsiders may be plagued by conflict between religious and political groups. Historians or chroniclers may be necessary, as part of the same or separate classes.

e) **Religious norms**. Note how the religion affects the peoples' routine and outlook. Invariably, a population's everyday lifestyle evolves quicker than that of its clergy, and religion generally acts a restraint to change. Rigid religious norms may proscribe or prescribe certain activity. Any modification to these practices must overcome the resistance of religious elements, making the injection of new culture difficult. The stronger the part religion plays in the lives of a people, the more faith they have in their norms, the more insular they are, and the stronger their bonding. Members of the culture may not be sensitive to outsiders' norms, and conflicts may occur. Adaptation may be hard for these people. More open-minded groups may have less of a cultural identity, resulting in a weaker societal organization. Their ability to resist absorption, weather catastrophe, undertake grand projects, or wage war may be impaired.



17.3.6 TECHNOLOGY

The GM should also record the culture's level of technology. Ascribe a simple label to each group and rough out a definition of what sort of skills and capabilities go with those labels. In the fantasy setting they may include totally unique concepts, such as labels based on the use of tools made from metals found only on the GM's world. One might employ a note about the technological age and add subdivisions or more specific labels for greater detail.

The following technological descriptions are historical examples. The weapon references include a suggested range for subtractions from the usual percentage OB. Note that some weapons such as bows or clubs made from specific materials already have their own set abilities and modifications are unnecessary. In addition, certain crushing weapon designs work relatively well when compared to counterparts made from more advanced mediums. Comparatively speaking, they perform better than complex thrusting, throwing or edged weaponry made from analogous inferior material.

a) **Old Stone Age (OSA).** No metal used. Stone tool use confined to a variety of types of chopping and hand axe devices made from pebbles of varying sizes. Choppers are nothing more than pebbles with a rough but sharp edge, formed by flaking chips off the rock. The more sophisticated hand axes (-30 to -75) are like large, hand-held stone blades or points. Wood is used, but weapons are generally clubs (-0) or spears (-25 to -50) made out of long sticks with fire tempered points.

b) **Middle Stone Age (MSA)**. Still no metal in use. Stone is worked by a variety of methods and there are some very effective tools. Wood and bone tools become widespread; and by combining wood shafts with harder spear, ax, and knife points, some reasonable (-15 to -35) weapons become available. Combination maces (-10 to -25) are relatively effective. Throwing spears (-15 to -35) and atlatl (spear-throwers) are used instead of bows.

c) **Late Stone Age (LSA)**. No true metalwork (e.g., smelting), although naturally occurring metal pieces might be used. Pottery appears in force. Highly specialized and sophisticated stone, bone, and combination tools (-10 to -25) are widespread, and include farming implements and a wide variety of weapons. Various shortbow types are in use. Mixed economies using rotational agriculture require this technology as a minimum.



d) **Copper Age (CA)**. Natural metals, mostly copper, are frequently used for certain implements such as knives or pots. Metalwork consists of trimming and shaping pieces and primitive smelting enables folk to create large metal objects. Bone, hardened wood, stone, and other mediums remain the tools of the common man.

e) **Bronze Age (BA)**. True metal industries form with the advent of extensive smelting and the making of bronze tools out of tin and copper. Smithies abound and a vast variety of weapons (-0 to -10) are in evidence, but metal objects are still confined to a relatively small segment of society and military units are small and often made up of the elite.

f) **Iron Age (IA)**. Sophisticated metalworking methods enable society to master alloys such as iron and create vast quantities of metal objects. Smiths use hot, bellows-assisted forges to smelt metals heretofore unworkable. Hard iron (-0), and later steel (+5 to +10), weapons are widespread and cheap, enabling large armies to be equipped properly.

17.3.7 CLASS SPECIALIZATION

As societies begin stockpiling surplus food, free time becomes available to some or all of the people. This extra time is normally used to develop new crafts and specialists appear. With further increases in food production efficiency, more and more people begin to work outside the food producing class and whole new classes—workers, merchants, administrators, religious figures, and overlords—pop up. Settlements expand into towns and then cities; new arts flourish. People begin to trade and travel abroad regularly and become aware of a need for a foreign policy. With the accumulation of wealth by society, certain groups benefit more than others and the concentration of riches flows toward their coffers. The gap between rich and poor often increases, creating new societal frictions and a need for controlling large, disenchanted groups.

The GM should note the society's subsistence pattern and compare this to their available resources. In so doing one gets an idea of how much time is devoted to acquiring food, and therefore the extent of non food-producing labor. This provides a rough idea of the class structure of a group, indicating the degree of specialization. Highly specialized societies generally are better organized, have developed political and religious structures, enjoy higher technology levels, consume more resources, and wage war more effectively.

Class structures vary with culture, although most are ordered according to a system of identification, be it based on kinship, spiritual association, race, personal wealth, education, obligations, jobs, or landholdings. In certain societies, for instance, people who handle meat (perhaps because of the blood) or bury the dead are considered "unclean." They are kept outside typical social circles and cannot marry or interact beyond the bounds of their class.

A few of the more common classes groups follow. The GM may wish to draw upon them for examples.

Lower Classes

a) **Slaves.** Slaves are the property of other folk and receive no pay for their work. As such, they are considered objects and not people and enjoy no rights. They stand outside the system and cannot own other property. Typical slaves are war captives, criminals, or the offspring of other slaves. They are tied to their master and not normally to the land.

b) **Serfs**. Unlike slaves, serfs are tied to land and not their master. As fixtures, they are transferred with the passage of the title to the parcel upon which they live and work. Serfs have limited rights, including the ability to work a plot of land on their own behalf during

their spare time. They cannot own real estate, but can acquire personal property. Unfortunately, they are bound to their home and their profession, which is almost always farming.

c) **Debt-servants.** Debt-servants labor to repay sums they have stolen or borrowed and cannot otherwise make amends for; so they serve. Generally tied to their creditors or creditor's associates, they are temporary slaves who retain some standing.

d) **Indentured servants.** These folk contract to serve a lender for a set period, in return for food, board, and a lump sum following their service. Thus, they voluntarily become debt-servants.

Middle Classes

a) **Freemen.** As their name implies, freemen are bound neither to the land or another. They can own realty or personal property and are free to move and labor as they desire, given their often meager resources. For some, this is unfortunate, since they have no provider aside from their own family.

b) **Thanes (Thegns).** Thanes are akin to freemen, but own land in a feudal structure. In return for their land grant, they owe military service to the grantor or his assigns. Their landholdings give them stability and respectability and they may control serfs or other (unlanded) freemen.

c) **Craftsmen.** Craftsmen are accredited laborers whose special training and association (e.g., guilds) give them accentuated standing. They owe a responsibility to perform better than mere laborers, but command fair prices and a fair degree of respect. Prior to reaching their position, they had to work as apprentices. Some serve as wandering journeymen after their apprenticeship, becoming a member of a settled association after a set period of less lucrative service.

Upper Classes

a) **Lords.** Lords have dominion over others, either as the rulers of people (e.g., heads of clans or tribes), or as the masters of specific territories (e.g., barons, earls, dukes, etc.). Feudal lords enjoy rights to land and its human resources, while nomadic lords hold sway over specific people as a result of personal bonds of allegiance. Whatever the case, their power stems from the ability to control others and call upon large groups of folk to serve their desired course.

b) **Overlords.** Overlords (e.g., kings or high kings) manipulate or command a number of lords, serving to unify large areas or great numbers of people.

Unique Groups

a) **Untouchables.** The "untouchable" folk are considered impure and, as such, are a danger to the untainted. Be they criminals or folk associated with an "unclean" (but usually necessary) profession, they must keep to themselves. They have normal rights, so long as they do not attempt to go beyond the strictures assigned to their class (e.g., marry outside their class or leave the quarter in which they live and work).

b) **Contraries.** The class of contraries is invariably small and serves as one way of controlling psychotic tendencies in certain folk. Contraries have mystical/spiritual standing, but do not live as others. They participate in society on special occasions or in a highly regulated manner (e.g., in certain rituals). In all cases, however, they operate contrary to normal conventions. For instance, contraries commonly must do everything (or most significant things) backwards: they walk backwards, ride facing behind, rinse before scrubbing, charge when others retreat, speak opposite to their meaning, etc. Among their culture, however, they may be considered unassailable, invincible and inexplicable incarnations.

c) **Cross-laborers**. Because of sexual boundaries, these groups are necessary. They are men or women who perform tasks typically associated with the opposite sex, but required to be done by others. For instance, some cultures only allow women on war-parties and restrict cooking chores to men. In order to bring a cook along on an attack, they take a female cross-laborer, a women who lives as a man. Eunuchs who guard harems are cross-laborers. Among many cultures, this class serves as an outlet or control for homosexuality.

17.3.8 ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND SYMBOLISM

One of the main problems to be dealt with in an FRP game is the need for quick, consistent layouts. The GM can resolve this by establishing typical architectural themes for each society, concentrating on standards tied to the available technology, resources, and values: (1) building materials, (2) shapes and profiles, (3) door mechanism, (4) traps, (5) window openings, (6) water and latrine facilities, (7) guard posts, etc. A few basic designs can serve as the models for military, ceremonial, administrative, and residential structures. This will enable the GM to work on a theme when devising specific building layouts, or to simply employ the very standard design. This same technique can be used with respect to other art, such as ceremonial or magic items.

Significant Numbers

Art, architecture and symbolism all express in a non-linguistic way the manner in which a society thinks. One concept common to most cultures, and very helpful to the GM, is the significant number. Some societies, especially advanced ones, may have a number of important numbers, but in nearly every case one is paramount. This number will manifest itself in a variety of ways, perhaps dictating (1) the number branches of government; (2) the multiples of pages in ceremonial books; (3) the multiples of men in religious and military units or orders; (4) the ratio of measurements in building design; (5) the number of pockets or boroughs in a town; (6) the number of political divisions; or even the number of jewels in a standard crown or pendant. By establishing one or more significant numbers, the GM can create with helpful, general scheme.



Symbolism and Motifs

Other basic themes related to values and lifestyle might be incorporated, such as repeated usage of plant and animal motifs or peculiar abstract symbols. Each symbol might have a particular value or association, say with a god, or a religious group or myth. Some might form the core of the local heraldry. In the context of a game the PCs might begin to tie certain art and symbolism with dangerous or beneficial places and individuals simply by carefully studying recurrent themes.

Keep in mind a few techniques common to most cultures when designing symbols. People typically look to things common in their surroundings for form, such as prevalent plants (e.g., cornstalks for columns) or topographic features (e.g., a pyramid might mimic a mountain or riverine mud-mound). Symbols associated with victory or religion provide legitimacy and allude to power. Symbols intended to identify something from far away or in poor conditions (e.g., heraldric coats-of arms) depend on simple forms, sharply contrasting patterns and hues, and easily obtainable colors. This latter symbolism serves to denote military or political allegiance, and must be clear and relatively widespread statement. In such situations, one does depend on rarely imported dyes for color or convoluted designs for imagery.

17.3.9 POLITICS AND WARFARE

Because a chart of cultural elements is largely needed to show how a people will respond to situations, particularly encounters with the PCs and NPCs, politics and warfare should be emphasized. Much of the necessary background information already roughed out will dictate these elements. Knowledge of class structure and specialization, for instance, will give the GM the basic parameters for the size and effectiveness of the political and military groups. Their position in society will determine how important war is to the people. A sophisticated ruling class with laws and a judicial system or process might respond differently than a small group of warrior/chiefs who rule solely by force.

The GM can quickly sketch these elements by noting the following factors.

Politics

a) **Leadership.** Size and structure of society's leadership, especially the predominance of powerful families and individuals;

b) **Army's status**. Position of the army in day-to-day life;

c) **Class controls.** Operation of ruling power with respect to class groups and people as a whole;

d) **Legal code**. Existence, degree of sophistication, and practical applications of the legal code;

e) **Judicial structure**. System and mechanisms of justice and the means of punishment;

f) **Foreign relations.** External politics, the foreign policy and alliances.

Once the external politics for the individual societies are established, a chart of interrelationships—alliances and rivalries—can be made. This proves invaluable when creating the flow of political events.

Typical political structures or governmental systems include:

a) **Anarchy**. Actually, the absence of a working structure or government, generally leading to complete disorder and confusion.

b) **Clan.** A large group of families or bands (family groups) which claim descent from a common ancestor and have strong blood ties. They are typically ruled by a chieftain or warlord, although a council of representatives (e.g., elders) may possess some or all of the real power and authority.

c) **Democracy**. A society where the ultimate power is vested in the citizenry. Under this system, each citizen has an equal vote.

d) **Dictatorship**. Absolute power, but not necessarily authority, is held by one person (the dictator).

e) **Feudal.** A somewhat decentralized system based on various tiers of landholders (possessors or owners). Those with lesser holdings (vassals) derive their grants and security from those above and, in return, provide the greater landholder (lords) with goods (e.g., food) or services (e.g., troops). Such a system is often hereditary.

f) **Monarchy**. Absolute power and authority is held by one overlord, the monarch (e.g., king, queen, emperor, empress, etc.). Such a system is generally hereditary.

g) **Oligarchy**. Power and authority rests in the hands of a small number of individuals (oligarchs), who may form a coalition or elite upper class.

h) **Republic.** Supreme power rests in one or more representative, governmental assemblies elected by the citizenry. Citizens may or may not have practical equality (i.e., an equal vote).

i) **Theocracy.** A state where the ultimate political power and authority rests with those who hold supreme religious power and authority. The overlord(s) is often considered a deity or divine representative.

j) **Tribe.** A group of related clans or a large collection of people who maintain the same culture and consider themselves brethren. They are typically ruled by a council of elders (e.g., clan chieftains) and/or a high chieftain or king.

Military Structures

a) **Command**. Structure and leadership;

b) **Routine** Day to day operations;

c) **Arms** Type of weapons used, including standard combinations and/or unusual design.

d) **Outfitting**. Armor and military garb, including shield and helm designs;

e) **Theory**. Standard responses, be they tactical or strategic.

The GM should pay close attention to typical techniques and equipment, and unique or highly specialized weaponry. One helpful organizational standard is the use of the culture's significant number as the common denominator for judging the size of military units.



17.4 CULTURE GENERATION

These charts allow the GM to construct sweeping concepts during play; allowing him to travel into unprepared areas or deal with unpredictable situations. When this happens, the GM can develop guidelines for local cultures using these charts.

There are five charts: one for subsistence patterns, a second concerning technology, a third dealing with societal structure and kinship, a fourth for political structures, and a fifth covering military organization.

Note: *These charts should only be used for unexplored and/or undocumented areas. It is assumed that many, if not most, sophisticated economies are documented.*

Use the following steps:

- Roll for subsistence patterns (the locale of the culture must be known).
- Roll for technology (the subsistence pattern must be known).
- Roll for the kinship & structure (the subsistence pattern must be known).
- Roll for the political structure generation (the kinship structure must be known). Note that the bulk of the chart should only be used for societies with a mixed economy (the other types of economy should use the smaller chart shown in the chart note).
- Roll for the military system (the political structure must be known). Note that the military chart should only be used with societies who have a technology of either Bronze Age or Iron Age. Other societies would not have an organized military. Note that these are suggested unit types. The numbers and nature of troops will vary with a societies population size and density.

All of these issues will be dealt with in detail in another publication.



SUBSISTENCE PATTERN CHART

Roll	Locale B	F	G	I	L	M	Q	S	Z	C	D	H	J	P	T
01-30	he	me	he	fe	fe	fe	he	fe	he	hg	hg	he	sb	hg	hg
31-50	he	fe	he	fe	me	fe	he	fe	he	hg	sb	he	hg	hg	fe
51-65	hg	sb	he	hg	sb	me	hg	fe	he	hg	he	hg	hg	he	hg
66-75	hg	me	he	hg	fe	sb	me	hg	hg	fe	me	hg	fe	he	fe
76-85	hg	me	he	sb	me	me	me	me	hg	fe	me	hg	hg	sb	hg
86-92	me	me	he	me	me	fe	hg	me	me	me	me	hg	he	sb	fe
93-97	sb	he	hg	me	he	hg	me	me	me	me	me	sb	me	me	fe
98-100	fe	hg	he	he	hg	he	fe	he	he	sb	fe	me	sb	fe	hg

Locale Key: B = Breaks/wadis; F = Freshwater coasts/banks; G = Glacier/snowfield; I = Islet/reef/atoll; L = Lake/river; M = Marsh/swamp; Q = Oasis/isolated water sources; S = Saltwater shores/shallows; Z = Desert; C = Coniferous forest/taiga; D = Deciduous/mixed forest; H = Heath/scrub/moor; J = Jungle/rain forest; P = Plains/grassland/savannah; T = Tundra

Subsistence Pattern Key: hg = hunter/gatherer economy; sb = slash and burn agriculture ecnomy; he = herding economy; fe = fishing economy; me = mixed economy

TECHNOLOGY CHART

Roll	Subsistence Pattern hg	sb	he	fe	me
01-30	MSA	LSA	BA	CA	IA
31-50	LSA	CA	IA	BA	IA
51-65	LSA	BA	IA	IA	IA
66-75	BA	BA	BA	IA	IA
76-85	CA	BA	CA	CA	IA
86-92	OSA	IA	LSA	LSA	BA
93-97	MSA	LSA	MSA	MSA	BA
98-100	LSA	LSA	OSA	OSA	CA

Technology Key: OSA = Old Stone Age; MSA = Middle Stone Age; LSA = Late Stone Age; CA = Copper Age; BA = Bronze Age; IA = Iron Age

KINSHIP & STRUCTURE CHART

Roll	hg	sb	he	fe	me
01-50	Mat	Mat	Pat	Mat	Bil
51-75	Pat	Mat	Mat	Mat	Pat
76-90	Mat	Pat	Mat	Mat	Pat
91-97	Pat	Bil	Bil	Bil	Mat
98-100	Bil	Pat	Mat	Pat	Pat

Kinship Key: Mat = Matrilineal (traced through the female line); Pat = Patrilineal (traced through the male line); Bil = (traced through male or female line).

POLITICAL STRUCTURE CHART

Roll	Kinship Structure Matrineal	Patrilineal	Bilateral
01	anarchy	anarchy	anarchy
02-30	clan	tribe	monarchy
31-50	tribe	clan	oligarchy
51-65	tribe	monarchy	feudal
66-75	theocracy	feudal	republic
76-83	dictatorship	dictatorship	dictatorship
84-88	monarchy	oligarchy	democracy
89-92	oligarchy	theocracy	tribe
93-97	feudal	republic	clan
98-99	republic	democracy	theocracy
100	democracy	theocracy	theocracy

Except for extraordinary cases, only societies with a mixed economy (me) have the size and complexity necessary to support a sophisticated political structure. So, the GM should normall restrict the use of this chart to mixed economy cultures. Other societies (hg, sb, he, and fe) follow a different pattern: 01-15 = family; 16-50 = band: 51-80 = clan; 81-95 = tribe; 96-99 = tribal confederacy; 100 = other (permits roll on table above).

MILITARY SYSTEM CHART

Roll	Political Structure clan	tribe	feudal	oligarchy	monarchy	dictator	theocracy	republic	democracy
01-30	wh/I/S	wh/I/M	fa/S/M	pa/M/M	pa/M/L	ca/M/L	ca/M/L	pa/M/M	va/M/M
31-50	wh/I/S	wh/S/M	fa/S/S	ca/M/L	fa/M/M	pa/M/M	ca/M/M	va/M/L	va/S/M
51-65	wh/I/S	wh/M/M	fa/M/S	ma/S/S	ma/M/M	ca/M/M	wh/L/L	va/M/M	mi/M/M
66-75	mi/S/S	mi/S/S	ma/S/M	ma/S/M	mi/M/L	ca/M/L	va/L/L	ca/M/M	pa/S/M
76-85	mi/M/S	mi/S/M	ma/M/M	ep/S/S	mi/M/M	wh/M/L	mi/L/L	mi/M/L	ep/S/M
86-91	mi/S/M	va/S/M	pa/M/M	pa/S/M	ca/M/L	ma/M/L	fa/M/L	mi/M/M	ma/M/M
92-95	va/S/S	fa/M/M	ep/S/M	mi/M/M	ep/S/M	mi/L/L	mi/M/M	ma/M/M	wh/M/M
96-97	gu/S/S	gu/S/M	mi/M/L	mi/M/L	ma/M/L	ma/M/M	ep/S/M	ep/S/M	pa/M/M
98-99	nm/I/S	nm/I/M	mi/M/M	fa/S/M	gu/S/M	ep/M/M	—	ma/S/M	ma/S/M
100	—	—	mi/I/M	nm/I/M	ep/M/L	gu/S/M	nm/I/M	—	—

Results: This chart yields a three factor result, each factor separated by a slash (/). The first factor, indicated by two small letters, provides the culture's military organization or disposition. The second factor, covered by a capital letter, indicates the unit formation size for tactical situations (e.g., patrols, sorties, caravans, skirmishes). The third factor, also denoted by a capital letter, is the unit formation size for strategic situations (e.g., battles, campaigns, wars).

Codes: ca = conscript army (standing force of draftees); ep = elite professional army (well-trained standing army); fa = feudal army (troops loyal to local territorial lord); gu = guard (no army, only a guard or police force to issue orders); ma = mercenary army (paid professionals from outside culture); mi = militia (not at arms); nm = no military (no martial organization); pa = professional army (average standing force); va = volunteer army (at arms); wh = whole (entire society at arms);— = pacifist society (refuse to wage war or, in some cases, fight). I = Individual (tactical unit of 1; no standard strategic unit); S = Small unit (tactical unit of 2-10; strategic unit of 10-100); M = Medium unit (tactical unit of 10-50; strategic unit of 100-500); L = Large (tactical unit of 50-200; strategic unit of 500+).

ACTIVITIES IN THE WORLD

A campaign tells a complete story. It is more than the sum of its parts; it transcends the vignettes that surround its individual adventures. The campaign relates a tale about a world, focusing upon the events involving the characters who are the principle actors. So, while the diary of the characters' adventures lies at the heart of the story, it is necessary to document the ongoing saga of the world's other folk. Besides providing depth of drama and a foundation for sub-plots, the events normally outside the characters' touch occasionally affect play. One never knows when a seemingly innocent war provides a new mission for characters thousands of miles away.

18.1 VARIOUS LEVELS OF PLAY

With the world created and the characters prepared for the play, the game is ready to roll. Now it is necessary for the GM to keep track of things while everything is in motion. The easiest way to accomplish this often-involved task is to follow a simple routine using handy checklists.

Since events and activity occur on varying levels, at widely differing paces, and with markedly unique results, it is necessary to understand and distinguish the separate factors. Once the GM recognizes these levels of play, he can create a checklist for each one. Then he can refer to the sequence appropriate for the action occurring at a given moment.

Real Time Versus Game Time

The simplest way is to categorize activity according to the time and people involved. In a FRP game there are two applicable dichotomies. With respect to people, there are (a) the characters and (b) everyone else. When dealing with time, there is (a) real time and (b) game time.

1) **Real Time.** Real time is the time it actually takes to resolve activity, the period the game actually involves in everyday life. For instance, a standard session that begins at 4 pm and ends at 11 pm takes 7 hours of real time.
2) **Game Time.** Game time is based on the passage of events in the context of the game. So, if a voyage in the game takes place between the 1st day and the 21st day of a given month, it involves 21 days of game time. (Hopefully, it should take quite a bit less real time.)

The Three Levels

Based on this criteria, a campaign involves three tiers or levels of action.

1) **World Activity.** Action on a grand strategic level which involves great numbers of folk and has impact in large areas. Such activity involves great numbers of folk and has impact in large areas. Such activity involves sweeping political, cultural, and military events and may proceed over a considerable period of time. The characters may have little or no impact on world activity, and the entire campaign may run its course within a short span of world history. Such action does not center on the player characters; instead, it centers on the rest of the world (hence the label). World activity is documented in periods of weeks, months, and occasionally years. Typically, world activity involves the greatest amount of game time versus real time.
2) **Strategic activity.** Unlike world activity, strategic activity specifically revolves around the characters. It involves shorter periods of game time—normally hours, days, or weeks—and proceeds at a faster pace than events in the world arena. In contrast to the even faster-moving tactical activity, it occurs in a strategic environment, away from adventure sites. Strategic activity produces a lower ratio of game time to real time than world activity, and a higher ratio than found with tactical activity.
3) **Tactical activity.** Resolving tactical action often takes more real time than game time. This is due to the fact that tactical activity specifically involves action at adventure sites and takes place in periods of minutes (turns) or seconds (10 second rounds).

18.2 WORLD ACTIVITY

Since world activity takes place over considerable periods of game time, the GM needs to dwell on this subject less frequently than he does strategic or tactical activity. It is no less important, however, for it involves sweeping changes to the world framework, alterations that impact on the entire campaign setting and have repercussions virtually everywhere.

The checklist for managing world activity is defined elsewhere. The crucial concerns, however, are the changes which dictate world events and may affect the game. These are updates based on the flow of events set down. We suggest a monthly perusal of each factor.

1) **Weather.** The GM should keep track of the basic climatic patterns for the world, noting when the weather is most severe in certain areas. This can be accomplished using seasonal and subseasonal notations on the world or regional map(s). Periodic or unusual weather shifts (e.g., droughts or unusually heavy rains) which disrupt or change life in an area of particular import.
2) **Natural Catastrophes.** Record significant volcanic eruptions, plagues, floods, fires, etc.
3) **Cultural Events.** Follow the course of migrations, religious movements, civil strife, relatively sudden changes in customs, and any other alterations in the world's major cultures.
4) **Political Events.** Note any new wars, alliances, powerful political figures or movements, etc.
5) **Yearly Events:** If the GM deems it appropriate and/or necessary, a yearly event can be determined. See Section 18.5 for more on Events.



18.3 STRATEGIC ACTIVITY

Unless the characters become embroiled in an adventure—a fast-moving tactical situation—their moves are resolved as a function of strategic activity. Essentially, this involves play according to a daily routine tailored to the type of setting, be it in a settlement area (e.g., town or manor) or in the countryside (e.g., along the road or in the wild).

In some cases strategic activity slows as events swallow periods of game time that last longer than a day. Recuperation or research often take weeks, during which the GM can concern himself with the sequence of world activity. These situations allow the GM to ignore the daily routine for one or more days. Once the action picks up again, he should return to the daily checklists. Generally, the faster the pace of game (i.e., the more action packed in a given period), the more important it is to keep track of events by a set sequence. When the game time pace proceeds to the point where action must be resolved on a minute by minute basis, the GM should turn to the tactical play sequences.

Action in the Countryside

1) **Travel.** Most action in the countryside involves travel—be it by foot or horse, land or sea, trail or airway—so it is critical to get an understanding of conditions the characters labor under: the nature of the trail, terrain, pace, encumbrance, health, etc. Normal strategic movement requires a check every four hours (eight hours in the open sea), at which time the GM should review any changes in these factors. The Strategic Movement Chart provides parameters for resolving movement in most game situations. If the characters intend to stay together, they will move at the pace of the slowest group member. See *RMSR* for the strategic movement rates.
2) **Resting.** Most groups travel 8 to 12 hours a day while during a comfortable journey. They rest fifteen minutes every two hours under normal trail conditions, or ten minutes per hour of travel in rough terrain. Any mean (e.g., lunch) break normally lasts between thirty minutes and an hour and a half. Most groups require such a respite every 4 to six hours, especially on rough trips.
3) **Scouting.** It is not uncommon for a group to be actively searching for some place, something, or someone. Springs, camp sites, rest sites, adventure sites, herb caches, etc. all catch the fancy of a character at one time or another. In such cases, the GM should determine whether the search is specific or general in nature, and what resources the group may have. Then permit the characters to make one periodic roll to fine their goal, using the highest bonus of any group member, together with any extra bonuses derived from aids such as maps, legends, clues, detection devices, or orienteering instruments. Perception bonuses apply in most cases, while navigation skills come into play when making a map-aided search for a particular site.
4) **Evasion.** An invigorating chase always perks a journey. So does a desperate attempt to slip through heavily-watched areas while avoiding detection. In these situations, the GM refers to the Encounter Chart in @#$ The characters may find themselves attempting to avoid notice from a hostile and nosey populace or organized patrols. Alternatively, they may be chased by another group (direct pursuit) or subject to an encounter will search parties mustered from a folk up in arms (general "hue and cry"). In any case, note the stalking/hiding bonuses of each character, for they determine how well the adventures travel without leaving a visible trace. A party moves as fast, and is concealed as well, as its least effective member. Should the pursuers make contact with the party, a tactical (adventure) situations arises. If the group outdistances the pursuit so that the chasing force is at least four hours (one strategic move), their evasion is successful, In rain or snow the characters may escape with as little as an hour's lead (or more if the weather is particularly bad), so long as the traces they leave are not overly noticeable.
5) **Camping.** When a party sets camp, the GM should go over the lay of the land, sketching out prominent features. Characters should cite any unusual sleeping accommodations or conditions they undertake, and the GM should record any watch pattern (i.e., the length, composition, and position of shifts). A group may have a standard watch procedure to fall back upon, should they not specifically mention the matter. A GM must take care not to prompt or remind the party about camp precautions (e.g., starting fires), but should make sure of all routines (e.g., "unless otherwise stated, we have no fire and set caltrops and ropes around the camp"). Should an encounter occur and the strategic period (i.e., period during which an encounter roll is made) correspond with more than one watch, make another roll to see who is a vigil.
6) **Encounters.** As with any situation, the GM should tailor an encounters to the locale. Most basic encounters along a road, for instance, may be little more than passing meeting with other travelers—farmers, merchants, families, etc. Under normal conditions, the GM should make an encounter roll every 4 hours while the group is on the move and in wild or relatively unsettled areas. When the group is encamped, the GM should roll less frequently, say every 6 to 8 hours.

The Daily Countryside Routine

1) **Local.** Double check the character of the region, including its location, features, inhabitants, cultures. and recent/current events.
2) **Weather**. Establish wind, temperature, and precipitation for the day. Check trends and when and what type of changed may be involved. Tell the players about local ground conditions. (See Section 2.1.5 for more on climate and weather determination.)
3) **PC Travel Schedule.** Find out from players what their standard preferred travel times are, if any. Set the group's base movement rate and determine when they break for rests, food, and encampment. (See the Strategic Movement Chart.) Set times and note whether it is dark or light at given points.
4) **PC Travel Routine.** Sketch standard procedures: clearing of camp, destruction of tracks or signs of passing march order, readiness of weapons, checking for traps, tracking, periodic investigations, etc. Have each character make any necessary periodic maneuver rolls.

5) **Encumbrance.** Determine encumbrance, distribution of equipment and goods, physical status (e.g., wounds), and number of available power points for each character. Have the PCs mark off any food, herbs, or equipment they consumed or abandoned during the night, morning camp, or preparation for departure. Allow for experience point calculation.
6) **Movement.** Continue trip and sketch out or describe typical terrain along march route.
7) **Herb Searches.** Determine if the characters find any herbs or food along the way.
8) **Travel Encounters.** Roll periodic encounter rolls. Unless otherwise specified (e.g., the area is extremely dangerous or safe), check every 4 hours of daylight travel time and every 8 hours of nighttime journeying. Should an encounter occur, shift to the tactical sequence.
9) **Adventure Sites.** Sketch out or describe unusual places and experiences. Should the characters seek to make an adventure of the situation, shift to the tactical sequence.
10) **Rest Breaks**. Determine status of PCs when at rest (e.g., at lunch stops, watering holes, etc). Note type of desired rest stops and establish the spot they actually rest at. Find out who is on guard, etc. Check off food and equipment expended.
11) **Campsites.** At the point the PCs tire or wish to encamp, find out what the desired rest site is like and calculate what sites are available given the local conditions. Sketch out site after the PCs agree to make camp, noting local resources and circumstance (that which is known to, or concealed from, the players).
12) **Camp Routine.** Establish camp routine. Set the watch sequence, sleeping conditions, cover, readiness, protection measures, etc..
13) **Encampment Encounters**. Roll encounter rolls for period of encampment, In the event of an encounter, shift to the tactical sequence of play.

Action in Settlement Areas

Settlements typically provide havens from danger, a place for characters to rest, recuperate, re-equip, and reorient themselves. Like any setting however, they can possess ideal adventure sites or, at the very least, provide flavor and intrigue. They are also a source for information and trade, for they contain a relatively high concentration of folk. A GM should always be aware of the elements most common to activity in settlements.

1) **Commerce.** Since adventures often enter a marketplace in search of specific goods, a GM should address an area's trade facilities, economic structure, and supply and demand of goods. Note any unusual market forces (e.g., guilds, government institutions, or criminal associations), unusual items (e.g., unique weapons or herbs), or customs in the given spot. After all, many characters treat towns as little more than an opportunity to unload cash or unwanted booty in exchange for a much-sought after item. See Section 12.2 for complete guidelines on commerce and trading.
2) **Food and Lodging.** Most characters entering a settlement require food and lodging. The GM can refer to standard price lists (e.g., Section 13.0) or work up his own. In any case, he should determine the availability of places to stay, rooms, and specialized accommodations (e.g., rooms with single beds, private rooms, etc.). Record information on eateries and stabling facilities.
3) **Information Gathering.** Settlements can be hotbeds of gossip and news. Some contain learned or informed folk or other travelers, and a few possess libraries and Loremasters. Accurate or not, this information excites characters and can provide them with interesting opportunities for further adventuring. Local legends invariably cause a stir among the players, while rumors from a table of drunks have spawned the start of many a quest (before or after the brawl).
4) **Healing (Recuperation).** Since battle is a major element of most campaigns, healing is critical to a character's continuing survival.. Settlements permit characters to do more than just rest; comfortable facilities, Healers or Lay Healers, and a plethora of aids and herbs accelerate the recuperation process. Whenever a group enters a settlement, it is important to sketch out the accommodations and folk connected with arts of medicine. This can be anything from a well-staffed hospice to an old barber eager to operate with a rusty woodsaw.
5) **Recreation.** For characters in search of a little entertainment, settlements are ideal spots to relax and unwind. Bars, theaters, brothels, and gaming houses are only a few of the facilities that add spice to a character's otherwise mundane town routine. Since ruffians and adventurers often frequent these places, players glean plenty of action and offbeat information during a few well-spent hours of recreation.
6) **Encounters.** Despite the constraints of civilization, a chance encounter in a settlement area frequently turns into an adventure (in which case play switches to the tactical sequence outlined in Sec 3.3.4.). Settlements provide lots of people to deal with, many of whom embrace ideas at odds with those of the adventurers. Local politics or commerce can be volatile, and those interacting on a seemingly innocent level can be swept up in the intrigue and competition. Thieves and other opportunistic adventurers may abound. A fortunate turn may yield new and powerful friend, while an unhappy twist find a character without his purse (or even his head),

While in a settlement area, the characters often focus on widely differing individual needs. The access to numerous facilities and the overall increase in safety generally enable or prompt a group to split up, with each group member seeking items or services peculiar to his situation. This situation commonly forces the GM to run characters separately or in small groups. Whatever the case, a good sequence of daily play remains a fine foundation.

The Daily Settlement Routine

Smooth flow is essential to any good game and is particularly crucial when a large number of players are involved. This can be accomplished by using a solid sequence of play, a standard routine for determining the course of a day in the life of the adventurers. The following approach is designed to handle the days spent in settled areas and may be used in whole or part to aid the GM develop their own procedure.



1) **Accommodations.** Determine the characters' sleeping arrangements, including room locations, sleeping routines (e.g., watch patterns), and stabling needs.
2) **Travel Patterns/formations**. Find out which group members customarily travel together. Note what they carry on their typical sojourns. Remember that the folk of some settlements scoff at heavily-armored and fully armed visitors.
3) **Eating Routine.** Determine where and how the characters regularly eat, and who they might meet in the process. Sketch out the chosen eatery.
4) **Trade Routine.** Find out what commercial establishments the characters favor or wish to explore. Check in alterations they make in their equipment mix or travel formation before they enter into trade quarters.
5) **Recreation Routine.** Determine if their is any regular recreation routine for any character(s).
6) **Town Encounters**. Make periodic encounter rolls. While the characters move about and interact, a roll every 2 hours is appropriate. Should the players be secluded in their lodgings, a check every 8 hours is more appropriate. In case of an encounter (e.g., a meeting with mysterious travelers bearing a weather report or an attack by cutthroats), move to a tactical play sequence.

18.4 TACTICAL ACTIVITY

Tactical action involves periods of 1 minute turns or 10 second rounds. Such a sequence should be used whenever an encounter occurs or whenever a sojourn into a setting becomes an adventure (i.e., a place becomes an "adventure site").

Given the pace of tactical play, it is difficult to make game time flow as fast as real time, since interaction with each character is still critical. Explaining a turn by turn or round by round situation while soliciting all the player input can be a time-consuming process. Even with small groups, the resolution of a simple round takes at least one minute.

Yet, it helps to keep the game moving quickly, particularly when you want to simulate the tense, almost panicky atmosphere of certain tactical situations. These cases may call for a set real time game time equation, such as 1 round of game time = 6 minutes of real time (i.e., 1 second = 1 minute). This makes players act quickly, but can lead to a lot of screaming and discord. The GM will have to gauge the complexity of the scenario, account for the size of the group, and examine the personality of the players before applying such a strict formula.

The Tactical Sequence

Regardless of the pace at which turns and rounds are resolved, tactical action is incredibly detailed and it is important to follow a set sequence (lest anarchy reign and the game break down). The ***Rolemaster*** sequence is based on 6 ten second rounds per turn. See *RMSR* for more details on the Tactical Sequence.



18.5 EVENTS

If the GM deems it necessary and/or appropriate, he may generate yearly and monthly events for his campaign world. This creates a backdrop in which the player character move and act (without necessary involving the characters directly with the events). Note that the major difference between an Event and an Encounter is that characters generally have a lot of control with the direction that the Encounter takes (e.g., choosing to negotiate with the hostile band of dwarves); while in an Event, if the characters are directly involved at all, they have little control over the things happening around them (e.g., the inn they are staying in catches fire).

First a major event for the year is determined. After determining the event for the year, an event for each month of the year should be determined (using the system presented in Section 18.5.2). With all of these events determined, the GM should try and construct a story that explains why the events are happening (at least several of the events should be connected to some central story or plot). These yearly and monthly events should be generated as far in advance as the GM feels comfortable (most characters stay within one or two kingdoms during any game year).

Finally, each week, the GM should determine an event for each character in the game (or group of characters if that group is constantly together). These weekly events will often have to be generated one week at a time (because the GM does not necessarily know where the character will be from week to week).

See Section 18.5.4 for a sample of event generation.

18.5.1 YEARLY EVENTS

Once per game year, the GM should roll d100 and look up the result on the Yearly Events Chart. The result will be the major event for that year. The month of the event should be determined randomly.

Use the key below to assist in interpetting the events. Remember that most of the events will have to be tailored to fit the GM's gaming world.

Ambassador: An ambassador arrives from or is sent to another land (50% chance of either case). The ambassador remains their for 2d10 months. Ambassadors are sent for many reasons: to prevent war, form a military alliance, arrange a marraige, pay tribute, promote trade, gain culture, etc. Their arrival is always a major event for those of the court, accompanied by cermonies and banquets.

Assassination of a Lord: A high-ranking lord is assassinated. The court of the Lord is in turmoil for 3d10 weeks while the affairs of the lord are settled. Further complications are possible (especially if the player characters were either friends or enemies of the former lord).

Astrological Phenomena: A never before spotted astrological phenomena has appeared in the sky. This could be a comet, an unpredicted eclipse, a meteor shower, a new planet, etc. The exact effects of this will vary from nation to nation, but people should be talking about it for d10 weeks afterwards. If the kingdom/nation is superstitious, this could be an omen for some great event (the GM may choose another event to occur shortly after this one).

Birth: A high-ranking noble's family has given birth to a child. In most kingdoms/nations, this is a cause for celebrations by the noble and those under him.

Death of a Lord: A high-ranking noble dies (the GM must decide the nature of the death, but it should not be an assassination—could be in battle or of natural causes). Further complications are possible if the player characters were either friends or enemies of the former lord.

Earthquake, Major: A powerful earthquake strikes the land, causing extensive destruction in a 50 mile radius (the GM should select the center point of the disaster). Before and after the earthquake, there are a series of lesser tremors, causing slight damage (GM's discretion). The major quake (though lasting only a few hours) destroys cities, reshapes natural terrain features, causes great fires, and possibly kills hundreds of people. For each major town and/or city afftected, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 70 to the roll. If the result is over 100, that town/city suffers from major fires (as in the event, Fires, Major). Also, roll d100 (not open-ended) for each populated area and add 30. If this result is over 100, that populated area will suffer from a plague (as in the event, Plague).

Famine: Drought and poor harvest result in the region undergoing famine. The famine will last d10+2 months. Marauder groups appear, scavenging for food of any type (cattle, sheep, dogs, etc.). The population of the area is reduced by 5% per month of the famine. When the famine begins, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 20. If the result is over 100, a plague will also occur (as in the event, Plague). Obviously, the prices of food are increased for the duration of the famine.

Fire, Major: A huge conflagration sweeps a major city of the land, destroying 50% to 80% of the city. The city's population is reduced by 10% to 40%. The prices for building materials are increased for half a year. The prices for food are increased for one month. Roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 10. If the result is over 100, a plague will follow the fire (as in the event, Plague). Also, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 10. If the result is over 100, a famine will follow the fire (as in the event, Famine).

Incursion, Major: A major migration of creatures enters the kingdom/nation. Although this migration is not war, it is not necessarily peaceful. The size of the migration should be proportional to the size of the kingdom. Thus, several hundred creatures would be a major incursion for a small kingdom, while several thousand would migrate into a larger kingdom. The creatures may be humans, humanoids (dwarves, elves, etc.), or intelligent monsters. The newly arrived creatures attempt to live life as they always ahve, retaining their old habits and speaking their own language. This migration occurs over a period of d10 months.

Marraige: The ruler of the land has arranged an important diplomatic marraige involving either himself or his children. Such marraiges are used to secure alliances, gain control over smaller kingdoms, settle disputes, or appease overlords. The marraige is usually cause for festivals and feasting.

New Religion: A new religion or a new sect of an established religion appears in the land, quickly gaining converts and followers. Most likely, this causes hostility and feuding between the new religion and the established religions (possible violent behavior on either part). Note that some rulers actively support new religions in order to break the power that an established religion has developed. The initial arrival of the new religion takes d10 months, while the feuding between different sects and religions may last for centuries.

Plague: A terrible disease sweeps the land. The plague lasts for d10+2 months. The population of the area is reduced by 5% per month (for every 5 casters who can cast disease stopping spells, this is reduced by 1%). Those untouched by the disease and those of neighboring lands are suspicious of strangers. Traders do not enter plagued lands and the cost of imported goods rises for the duration of the plague. When a plague strikes, the entire country (unless very small) does not become diseased at once. Instead, the plague moves about, sweeping from town to town like a moving scythe.

Political Plot: A plot to overthrow the present government is discovered, or the ruler of the land is convinced that such a plot exists. Many nobles and government officials are stripped of rank, banished, and/or executed. This could prove complicated if the player characters hold titles or a governmental office. Spies and secret police are everywhere, ready to arrest people on the slightest evidence. The political turmoil lasts for d10 months. In addition, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 20. If the result is over 100, a group of young noblemen rise in rebellion (as in the event, Rebellion).

Rebellion: A powerful lord, secret society, religious sect, army commander, army of peasants, etc., attempts to overthrow the government in the area. The exact cause of the rebellion should be determined by the GM. Likewise, the exact strength of the rebellion should be determined by the GM. The rebellion lasts for d10 months befroe succeeding (highly unlikely) or failing.

Visitation: A major deity appears somewhere in the land, either for good or ill. News of the appearance travels fast and the site is revered or despised (depending on the nature of the visit). If the site is revered, it becomes the object of pilgrimages by the faithful. The religion or sect orders the construction of a temple or shrine on the site. If the site is despised, bad luck occurs within a 5 mile radius. Common folk move away (if possible) and the area is generally shunned. In this case, the area becomes the secret meeting place for evil followers and/or monsters.

Re-Roll Twice: Re-roll two times on this table, generating multiple major events for the year (this result could come up again, generating even more events for the year). When this occurs, the GM must roll muliple Monthly Events (one for each Yearly Event generated for the year).

Volcano: Either a dormant volcano errupts or a new volcano appears (roll d100: 01-70=dormant, 71-100=new). In either case, the eruption is preceded by tremors and rumblings identical to that of a major earthquake. When it errupts, all within a d10 mile radius is destroyed and clouds of thick ash rain down up to 3d10 miles downwind. The volcano spew smoke and ash for the remainder of the month. Thereafter, the volcano remains active for d10 months. Roll d100 and add 10. If the result is over 100, there is another major erruption sometime in this period.

War: Either the ruler of the kingdom launches a campaign against a neighboring land or the kingdom is invaded from a neighboring land (50% chance of either). The size of the armies vary according to the size of the kingdom (the GM should determine the actual sizes of all forces involved). This war will last for d10 years (with one major campaign per year, lasting d10 months). The effects of the war are many and varied. Prices on the campaign trail are inflated, civilian population moves away from the fronts, farms are fought over, etc. Away from the fronts, rebels may take this opportunity to start an uprising, etc.

Weather, Extreme: Some massive extreme of weather has occured. This could either be a prolonged wave of extreme temperatures, or some massive storm (left to the GM's discretion).



18.5.2 MONTHLY EVENTS

If the GM deems it necessary and/or appropriate, he may generate an event for the immediate area around the characters. These events should be generated once per month of game time. A separate roll should be made for each region of the area (e.g., county, shire, large settlement, etc.). To generate the event, use the following guidelines:

1) Make a note of the yearly event for the kingdom/nation.
2) Roll d100 (not open-ended). Cross-index the result with the type of event for the kingdom/nation on the Strategic Activity Events Chart.
3) Use the key to the Strategic Activity Events Chart to determine the effects of the event.

Note that the month in which the yearly event takes place will most likely have two events: the yearly event (usually very large in scope) and the monthly event (more localized in scope).

Use the following key to determine the exact effects of the event (note that "—" on the chart means no event for the month).

Accident: Some type of terrible accident occurs in the area. A bridge across a river may collapse, lightning may strike a building, a horse-drawn carraige may rampage through the street, a levee may break, etc.

Bad Harvest: Poor weather, lazy farmers, bad luck, and/or greedy scavengers have combined to yield a poor crop. Roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 5. If the result is over 100, a famine occurs (as in the yearly event, Famine).

Bad Weather: The weather for this month is particularly foul. This could mean either extremes of temperatures (either hot or cold) or some massive, long-lasting storm is lingerining in the region.

Bandit Activity: A force of bandits has moved into the area and are being particularly active. They have established some kind of a base in this area (usually in a remote, hard to reach place). They have spies and informers in the local towns and villages, appraising them of the movements of merchant caravans and treasury shipments. For every caravan that moves through the region, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 50. If the result is over 100, that caravan is attacked. For each lone traveller moving through the region, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 80. If the result is over 100, that traveller is assaulted by the bandits. Should any merchant or official be so indiscreet as to publically announce that he is transporting valuable cargo, that caravan will automatically be attacked. Mercenary guards are in high demand. The bandits will remain in the area until they are defeated or until the pickings become too slim to be profitable.

Birth: Roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 5, if the result is over 100, a miraculous birth has occured with a peasant family. The peasant family is always hard working, honest, and pious. As the miracle child grows, he will prove to be exceptional in some way. If the result was not over 100, a local noble or official has a child. This will be an occassion for feasting and celebration for the friends and associates of the noble/official.

Death: A local noble or government official dies; either of natural causes, battle, or misadventure.

Earthquake, Minor: The region is striken by a minor earthquake (affecting a d10 mile radius; center point chosen by the GM). Although loss of life is minor, 50% of the buildings in the area of the quake will suffer some form of damage. The earthquake is preceded by tremors identical to those that precede a major quake. After the quake, the costs for building materials increases for d10 months. For each major town or city, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 50. If the result is over 130, there is a major fire in the settlement (as in the Yearly Event, Fire, Major). If the event is not over 130 but over 100, there is a minor fire in the settlement (as in the event, Fire, Minor).

Excessive Taxes: A new edict comes from the ruler of the land, setting taxes at a greatly inflated rate. The ruler may need to finanace a military campaign, rebuild portions of the kingdom destroyed in a natural disaster, or maybe just line his own pockets. Poorer peasants are driven into poverty or debt slavery. Many are forced to sell their belongings and take up begging. Everyone tries to find ways to avoid the new taxes: petitioning for special exemptions or hiding their goods. Roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 30. If the result is over 100, there is an uprising (as in the event, Uprising). In addition, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add 70. If the result is over 100, there is an increase in bandit activity (the peasants turn to banditry; as in the event, Bandit Activity).

Famous Person: A person of great reknown (but no official position) has arrived in the area. The person is noted for an exceptional skill he possesses. The famous visitor attempts to arrive quietly and pass his time without arousing notice (he may have secret reasons for being in the area) He will remain in the area for d10 weeks.

Fire, Minor: A large fire sweeps a city, town, or village. If the fire occurs in a city, 4d10% of the buildings are destroyed. If the fire is in a town, (40+4d10)% are burned. If the fire is in a village, (60+4d10)% are burned to the ground. Costs for building materials are increased for d10 months. Loss of life is minor in this fire (fortunately).

Flooding: Flooding is caused by the collapse of a levee, dam, or dike (or by a sudden storm). The water rushes over the countryside in a d10 mile radius. Trees, buildings, and men are swept away.

Haunting: Rumors of strange supernatural events in the area have surfaced (the GM must decide as to the truth of the rumors).

Horrible Monster: Some creature of great evil and power moves into the area and begins terrorizing the local villages (the GM should select the nature of the monster). The general location of the monster's lair is known, though specifically where it lies is not. If not driven off (or defeated), local peasants will begin making offerings to it (in attempts to appease it). In return, other monsters of this type will appear (perhaps its own young) as the infestation becomes stronger.

Incursion, Major: A strong force has moved into the region with the intent of establishing a permanent home here. The size of the incursion is relative to the size of the region. The arrival of the newcomers is sudden (and happens all at once).

Incursion, Minor: Similar to **Incursion, Major**, except that the forces are much smaller.

Injustice: Wickedness has seized control of the local government. Corrupt and greedy officials are jailing and punishing innocent people. This evil may occur because the officials have been bribed, or wants to steal property, or has been tricked by others, or is simply cruel, or is extracting vengence.

Landslide: A major landslide or avalanche has blocked land travel in the region. The peasants begin working to clear the debris, but it will take 2d10 days. In non-hilly or non-mountainous regions, treat the landslide as a large sinkhole opening up; preventing travel (it must be filled before travel can resume).

Man/Maiden of Virture: A young man or woman of exceptional grace, wit, and beauty has appeared in the region. Roll d100 (not open-ended) to determine this person's origin: 01-50 = child or a powerful noble, 51-80 = of mysterious and magical origin, 81-90 = an exiled prince or princess, 91-100 = simply a commoner. This person charms and impresses everyone. This person possess many skills that exhibit fine tastes (arts, music, etc.).

Major Battle: A large and important battle is fought in the region. As with war and similar events, the GM must decide on the exact nature of the forces involved. Prior to the engagement, there are many troops moving through the area (possibly creating other interesting encounters). After the battle, the losers are forced to retreat. The locals may take up arms to protect their homes and/or hunt down the retreating forces. Patrols of the victorious force scour the countryside looking for stragglers, deserters, and small bands of the enemy.

Maneater: A wild animal has acquired a taste for human flesh and is raiding the local villages; carrying off women children and farmers. The animal strikes once or twice per week, killing its prey and dragging it away. The local folk are paralyzed with fear (unwilling to venture outside alone or after dark). The animal remains active until captured or killed.

Marraige: An important or influential person in the region either marries or completes the marraige arrangements for one of his children. The wedding is cause for feasting and celebration.

Notorious Criminal: A wanted villian is rumored to be in the area. There may be a reward posted for the capture or slaying of the criminal. The GM should decide whether the rumors are true or not.

Plague: As plague in the Yearly Events.

Recruiting: Soldiers are needed. These include enforced levies of peasants, bounties offered to capable officers, and recruiting gangs.

Troop Movements: Organized groups of soldiers, either friendly or enemy (or perhaps both at different times) sweep through the province. There is a fair amount of looting and collections of food and horses.



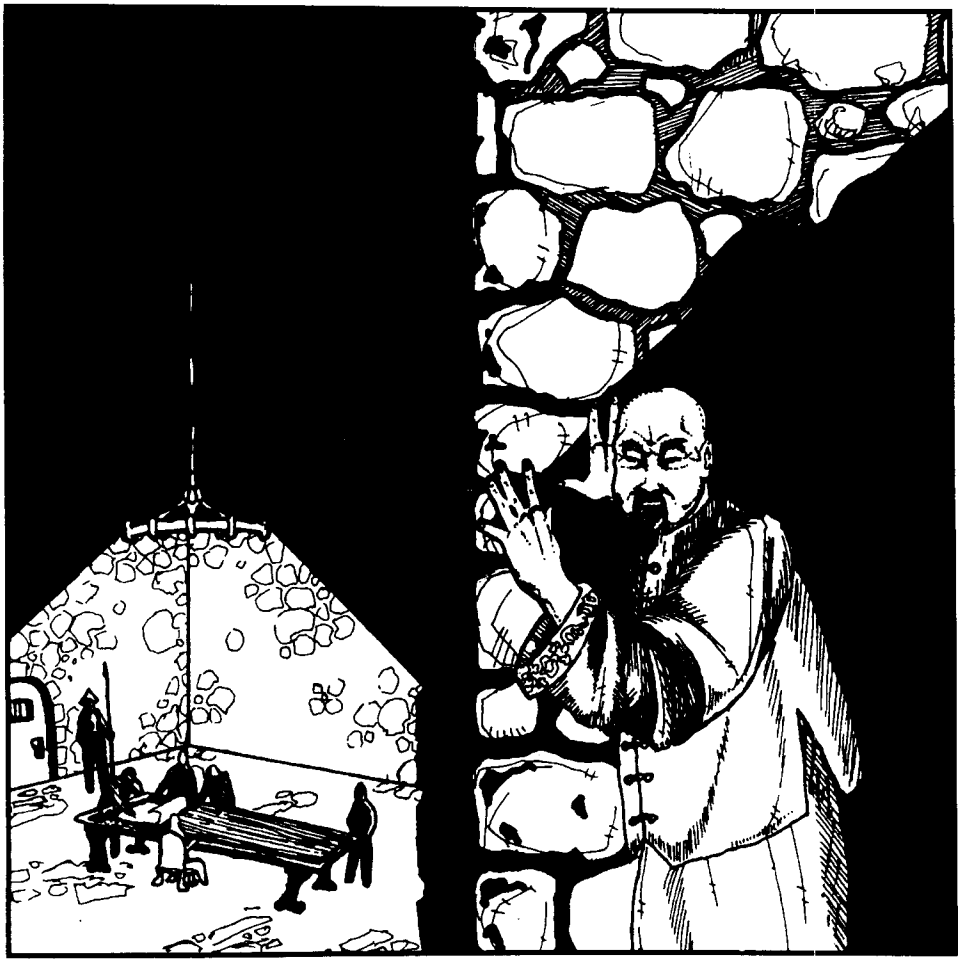
Uprising: Dissatisfied with their poor lot, the peasants and/or lower class rise in rebellion. The uprising begins in one or two villages and spread quickly to other rural areas of the region. The folk have no military plan or strategy; they simply attack any government official they can. If a strong leader should arrive to work with them, they can be turned into a trained force within 2d10 weeks. The GM should decide the exact composition of the forces involved in the uprising (remembering that the government usually deals quickly and effectively with uprisings).

Vengeful Stranger: A mysterious persno arrives in the area searching for a specific person. The travels through the region making discreet inquiries in villages and towns. He is seeking revenge for some injustice in his past.

VIP Visit: An important official arrives on an official visit to the region. The GM should determine nature of the visit. The visit is usually marked by official banquets and feasts.

18.5.3 WEEKLY EVENTS

Once per week, the GM should roll for a weekly event for each character (or group of characters if they are staying together). The GM should examine the most likely environment for the character to be in for that week. Then roll d100 (not open-ended) and consult the Weekly Events Chart. The resulting event will occur around the character at some point during the week (the GM should be careful to not seem contrived when having events happen directly around the character).



Use the key below to interpret the results from the chart.

Bandits: The immediate area that the character is in is under attack by bandits and rogues. There are 2d10 bandits present (each of a power level approximately equal to the character).

Bandit Camp: The character has discovered a bandit camp in the wilderness. The GM should determine the exact strength and composition of the camp.

Becalmed: The wind dies completely for 10d10 hours. All ships in the area must be rowed if they wish to move.

Contest: A local lord is sponsoring a contest. The contest could be a feat of strength, combat ability, or one of the arts (e.g., painting, sculpting, etc.). The event is open to the public (though there may be a limited number of entrants).

Crime: The character is the victim of a crime (i.e., a robbery, arson, etc.). If this is not appropriate, the character witnesses a crime and may be asked to assist in catching those involved.

Duel: The character is challenged to a duel by a local NPC. This could be because of an inadvertant insult to the NPC or some event in the past (or perhaps the NPC is mistaken, but too proud to admit his mistake).

Entreaty: The character is approached by a common person requesting help. The exact nature of the assistance needed should be tailored to fit the situation.

Fire, Small: A fire breaks out in the building the character is in.

Haunting: As Haunting in the Monthly Events.

Illness: Roll d100 (not open-ended). On a result of 01-20, a minor disease strikes the character. On a result of 21-100, a major disease strikes an NPC friend of the character.

Insult: The character has accidently insulted an NPC. The NPC will seek justification (sometimes immediately, but sometimes waiting until an opportune moment).

Invitation: The character has received an invitation from a local lord to attend an event that the lord is hosting.

Kidnapping: Roll d100 (not open-ended). On a result of 01-40, a kidnapping attempt is made on the character. On a result of 41-100, an NPC friend of the character is kidnapped. The exact nature and reason for the kidnapping should be determined by the GM.

Land: Land is sighted. Depending on the location of the ship, this could be an uncharted island, an uncharted coastline, or chain of islands.

Monster: The area (building, locale, etc.) is under attack by a monster. Roll on the Universal Monsters encounter table to determine the exact nature of the monster. The reasons behind the attack are subject to the GM's discretion.

Mystery: A strange or supernatural event occurs in the area around the character. The character either witnesses the event or the effects of the event. The character may be asked to investigate the event.

Nobles: A small group of nobles cross the character's path. The exact nature of the nobles (and their actions) is lef to the GM's discretion.

Pirates: Roll d100 (not open-ended). On a result of 01-50, one pirate ship has been sighted and is approaching the ship the character is on. On a result of 51-75, two pirate ships are sighted and are approaching the ship the character is on. On a result of 76-100, one or two ships are sighted that might be pirates; they are approaching the ship the character is on.

Plot: The character stumbles across some information concerning a plot against a friendly NPC. The GM should flesh out the details based upon the situation.

Ruins: The character has discovered a set of ruins. Roll d10 and consult the chart below to determine the type of ruins.

1	An old temple or shrine
2-6	An old resisdence (farmhouse, woodcutter's house, etc.)
7-9	An old tower or small fortification
10	An old castle or keep

After the type of ruins is determined, roll d100 (not open-ended) and add the modifier shown in parenthesis after the type of ruins. If the result is over 100, the ruins are inhabited by someone (or something).



Ship: A sail is sighted on the horizon. Roll d100 (not open-ended). On a result of 01-30, it is a mirage (or perhaps a ghost ship). On a result of 31-80, it is a merchant vessel. On a result of 81-100, it is a warship. The GM should determine the composition of the crew based upon the situtation.

Shrine: The character has stumbled across a small shrine to a local deity. If an offering is made, roll d100 (open-ended). If the result is over 100, the character will receive some special benefit from the deity. If the result is less than 05, the character has offended the deity and will receive some hinderance from the deity. If the character defaces the shrine (or is disrespectful), roll d100 (open-ended). If the result is less than or equal to 20, nothing happens. If the result is over 20, the character will be struck by a minor curse.

Special: The character has received an opportunity for a special mission appropriate for his chosen profession. The GM should use this event as a starting point for a series of adventures.

Storm: A fierce storm strikes. Treat as a gale (see Section @#$ for more on weather).

Stranger: An unknownNPC encounters the character and displays an inordinate amount of interest in them. Roll a d10 and consult the chart below to determine the origins of the stranger.

1-3	An ordinary traveller
4	A member of a secret organization or cult
5	An official from the secret police
6	An assassin on a mission
7	A nobleman travelling in disguise
8	A rogue wanting some cover story for his operations
9	A bandit wanting to rob the character
10	A creature who is disguised as a normal person

He is travelling in the same direction as the characters and would like to travel with them for their company and safety. The GM should detail the NPC as necessary.

Traveller: A person is encountered while travelling through the area. He has no special interest in the character, but is going in the same direction as the character and would like to accompany them for a short while (if allowed). The GM should detail the NPC as necessary.

VIP: A noble or important official makes a visit to the area that the character is in. No attempt is made to hide his arrival.

18.5.4 SAMPLE EVENTS

The GM, rolls a 21 for the yearly event and determines that a high-ranking noble man has a child this year. Rolling again, he determines that the child will be born in the third month of the Fall season. Next the GM rolls for each of the months (using the first column of the Monthly Events Chart). He determines the following:

1st month of Spring: Notorious Criminal (rolled a 78)

2nd month of Spring Bandit Activity (rolled a 15)

3rd month of Spring: No event (rolled a 93)

1st month of Summer: No event (rolled a 99)

2nd month of Summer: Vengeful Stranger (rolled an 82)

3rd month of Summer: VIP Visit (rolled an 85)

1st month of Fall: Injustice (rolled a 48)

2nd month of Fall: Famous Person (rolled a 32)

3rd month of Fall: Birth (Yearly Event), Bad Harvest (rolled a 06)

1st month of Winter: No event (rolled a 93)

2nd month of Winter: Bad Harvest (rolled a 07)

3rd month of Winter: Marraige (rolled a 61)

Examining the list of events above, the GM constructs the following story to accompany them:

In the Spring of this year, the notorious outlaw, Amrik Kilraven, is rumored to be in the region. Rumor has it that he is paying for bandits to begin raiding caravans and assaulting travellers. While Amrik is in the region, he is actually have a romantic affair with the Duke's daughter. This affair lasts for about 1 week (during which time the Duke's daughter gets pregnant; a fact that won't be discovered for a while). The bandit activity has nothing to do with the presence of Amrik (though it does cover his trail nicely).

In the Summer, the Duke has discovered that Amrik is responsible for his daughter's pregnancy. In addition, he has discovered that the outlaw leads a normal life as a travelling merchant (named Kaye) who sells tapestries in towns and cities. He sends his spies to all of the nearby villages and towns to see if anyone has seen Kaye the tapestry merchant. At the end of the summer, the Duke's chamberlaine begins travelling the region announcing that there is a bounty on the head of the outlaw Amrik Kilraven as well as one on the head of Kaye the Tapestry Merchant.

In the Fall, Kaye the Tapestry Merchant is found and hanged. However, it was the wrong man! Amrik makes his appearance known after the wrong man is swinging in the gallows, just to spite the Duke. Later in the fall, Engold Jadeforge, world-renown bounty hunter is hired to track down Amrik. Engold travels the region to make his presence known to all. The bad harvest later in the fall is attributed to the wrongs committed by Amrik. The Duke's daughter is sent away to a monestary to have the child (which is born a healthy male).

The winter wheat crops fail to come in... again attributed to the wrongs committed against the family of the Duke. As the year draws to a close, Amrik is caught by Engold, taken to the Duke and forced to marry his daughter.

All of the above will take place in the world around the characters. As the GM generates the weekly events, he will keep in mind the events of the year and try and entertwine them with the lives of the characters.

18.6 ENCOUNTERS

When the group is circulating in a settlement or on the move anywhere, the encounter procedure should occur every 4 hours. If the group is stationary roll once for every static period of 12 hours or less (e.g., roll twice for a thirteen hour encampment).

By comparing the care with which the PCs travel versus the activity in the given region, the GM can gauge the probability of an encounter. We suggest using a differential between two modified, open-ended dice rolls, since this allows the PC group to see how obvious their trail is while maintaining suspense. The procedure follows:

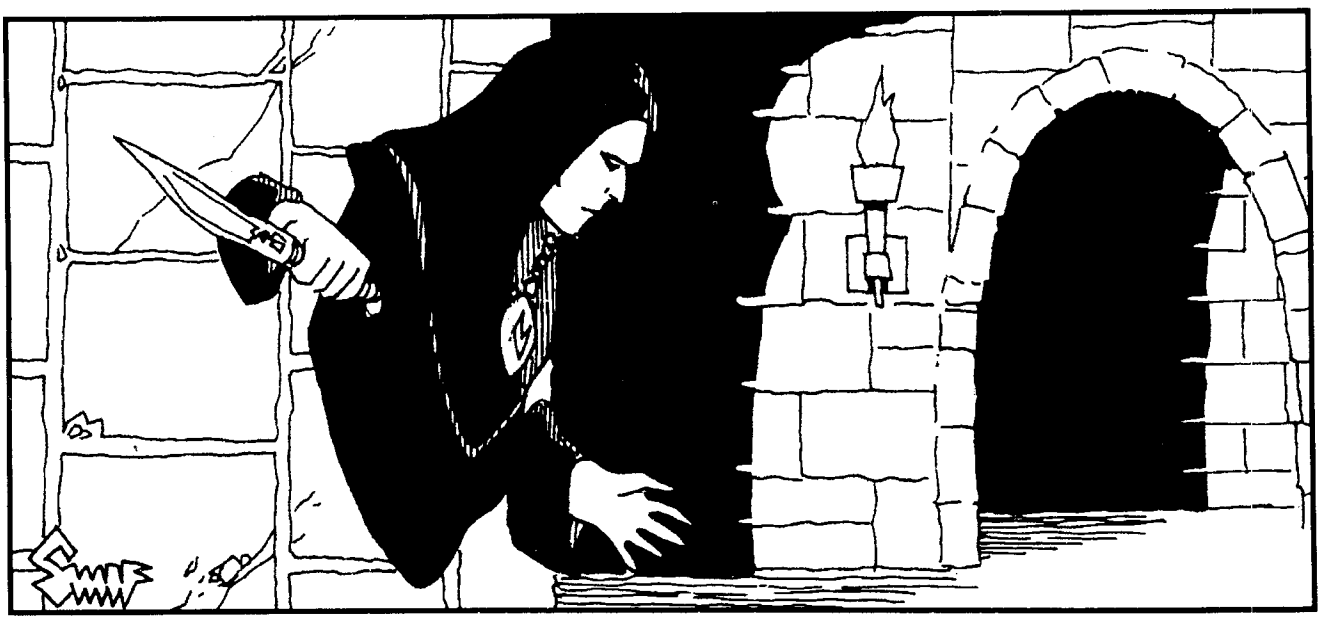
1) Avoidance roll—the PC group makes a "avoidance" dice roll and applies the appropriate modifiers to get an adjusted result;
2) Activity roll—the GM then makes an "activity" roll and applies the proper modifiers to get an adjusted result;
3) Roll comparison—the GM compares the two adjusted rolls;

4) Negative differential—if the avoidance roll exceeds the activity roll there is a negative differential and no chance of an encounter and the table is not used, and any pursuit is thrown off or avoided. This may be modified due to an unusual circumstance, or if there is a tracker in the pursuing group.
5) Positive differential—if the activity roll exceeds the avoidance roll there is a positive differential and the Standard Encounter Chart is consulted.

See *RMSR* for more details on the Standard Encounter Chart.

YEARLY EVENTS CHART

Roll	Event
01-10	Ambassador
11-15	Assassination of a Lord
16	Astrological Phenomena
17-31	Birth
32-40	Death of a Lord
41-43	Earthquake, Major
44-47	Famine
48-52	Fire, Major
53	Incursion, Major
54-63	Marraige
64	New Religion
65-69	Plague
70-73	Political Plot
74-80	Rebellion
81	Visitation
82	Volcano
83-90	War
91-95	Weather, Extreme
96-100	Re-Roll Twice



MONTHLY EVENTS CHART

Roll	YEARLY EVENT: Assassination, Incursion, Political Plot, Rebellion, War	YEARLY EVENT: Earthquake, Famine, Fire, Plague, Volcano, Weather	Other
01-05	Accident	Accident	Accident
06-07	Bandit Activity	Bad Harvest	Bad Harvest
08-10	Bandit Activity	Bad Harvest	Bad Weather
11-15	Birth	Bad Harvest	Bandit Activity
16-20	Death	Bad Weather	Birth
21-22	Excessive Taxes	Bad Weather	Birth
23-25	Excessive Taxes	Bandit Activity	Birth
26-27	Famous Person	Bandit Activity	Death
28	Fire, Minor	Bandit Activity	Death
29-30	Haunting	Bandit Activity	Death
31-32	Horrible Monster	Bandit Activity	Famous Person
33	Horrible Monster	Birth	Famous Person
34-35	Incursion, Major	Birth	Famous Person
36-37	Incursion, Major	Birth	Fire, Minor
38-40	Incursion, Major	Death	Fire, Minor
41	Incursion, Major	Death	Haunting
42-43	Incursion, Minor	Death	Haunting
44	Incursion, Minor	Death	Injustice
45-49	Incursion, Minor	Earthquake, Minor	Injustice
50	Incursion, Minor	Excessive Taxes	Injustice
51	Incursion, Minor	Excessive Taxes	Man/Maiden of Virtue
52-54	Injustice	Excessive Taxes	Man/Maiden of Virtue
55	Major Battle	Fire, Minor	Man/Maiden of Virtue
56-60	Major Battle	Fire, Minor	Maneater
61	Notorious Criminal	Flooding	Marraige
62-65	Recruiting	Flooding	Marraige
66	Recruiting	Flooding	Marraige
67-68	Troop Movements	Haunting	Marraiage
69	Troop Movements	Haunting	Notorious Criminal
71-71	Troop Movements	Horrible Monster	Notorious Criminal
72-73	Uprising	Horrible Monster	Notorious Criminal
74-78	Uprising	Injustice	Notorious Criminal
79-80	Vengeful Stranger	Landslide	Vengeful Stranger
81-82	—	Landslide	Vengeful Stranger
83	—	Maneater	Vengeful Stanger
84-87	—	Maneater	VIP Visit
88-92	—	Plague	VIP Visit
93	—	Uprising	—
94	—	VIP Visit	—
95-100	—	—	—

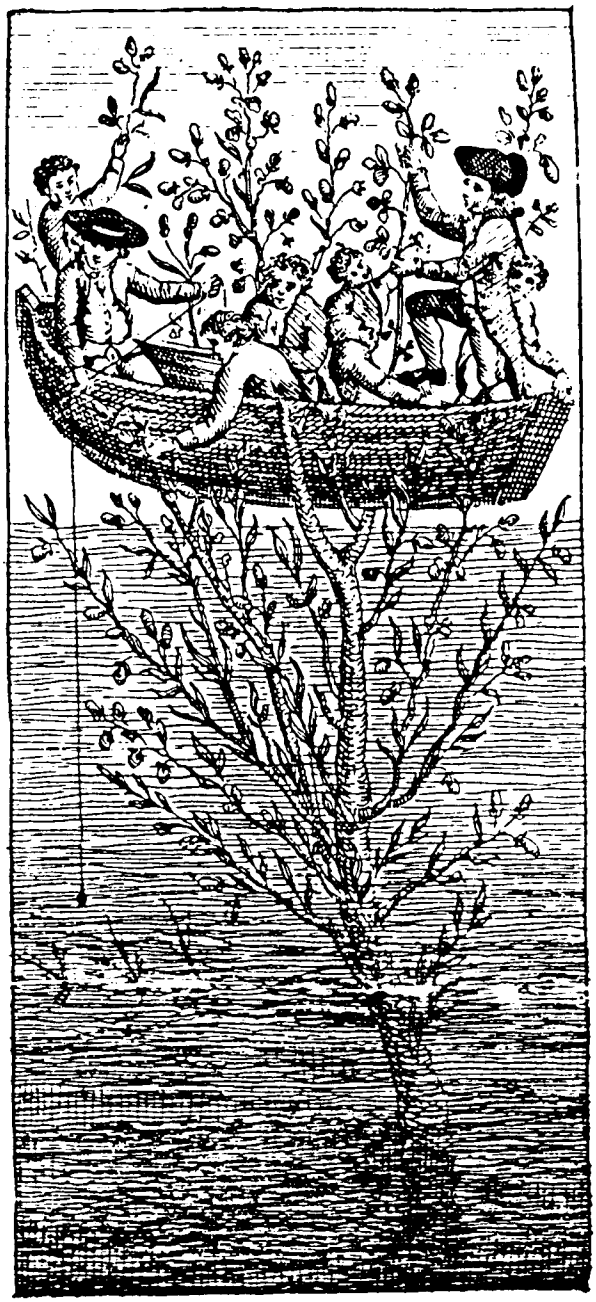
WEEKLY EVENTS CHART

Roll	LOCALE: City	Town	Village	Wilderness	Ocean
01-45	—	—	—	—	—
46	Contest	Crime	Bandits	Bandit Camp	Becalmed
47-48	Contest	Crime	Bandits	Monster	Becalmed
49-52	Crime	Duel	Bandits	Monster	Monster
51-55	Crime	Duel	Bandits	Monster	Monster
56-58	Duel	Entreaty	Crime	Monster	Monster
59-60	Duel	Fire, Small	Crime	Monster	Monster
61-64	Entreaty	Insult	Haunting	Monster	Monster
65	Entreaty	Insult	Haunting	Monster	Monster
66-67	Fire, Small	Illness	Monster	Monster	Monster
68-72	Illness	Illness	Monster	Monster	Monster
73-74	Illness	Invitation	Monster	Monster	Pirates
75	Insult	Invitation	Monster	Monster	Pirates
76	Insult	Kidnapping	Shrine	Ruins	Pirates
77	Invitation	Monster	Shriner	Ruins	Pirates
78	Kidnapping	Monster	Shrine	Ruins	Pirates
79	Nobles	Monster	Shrine	Ruins	Pirates
80-81	Nobles	Nobles	Stranger	Ruins	Pirates
82	Plot	VIP	Stranger	Ruins	Pirates
83	Plot	VIP	Stranger	Shrine	Ship
84-85	Special	VIP	Mystery	Shrine	Ship
86	Stranger	VIP	Nobles	Storm	Ship
87	Stranger	VIP	VIP	Storm	Ship
88	VIP	VIP	VIP	Stranger	Ship
89	VIP	VIP	VIP	Traveller	Ship
90	VIP	—	VIP	Traveller	Ship
91-93	VIP	—	—	Traveller	Ship
94-95	VIP	—	—	Traveller	Land
96-100	Re-Roll Twice	Re-Roll Twice	Re-Roll Twice	Re-Roll Twice	Re-Roll Twice

GAMEMASTERING TIPS

This section will detail some very specific situations that GMs might have to deal with and guidelines on how to deal with the situations. The intent of this section is not to be comprehensive, but rather to show GMs some examples of creative problem solving.

Note: *More Gamemastering Tips will appear in future products. These tidbits are intended to help GMs in running specific situations in their games.*



INTRODUCTION

Here are the topics that will be covered in this section:

Observations on Martial Artists: Many GMs believe that martial arts in ***Rolemaster*** is unbalanced (compared to other forms of attacks). Here is a detailed analysis looking at how to make sure martial artists do not get out of hand in your game.

The Sinking Ship: Tired of your players complaining about losing equipment when their ship goes down? Make them feel lucky to have gotten out alive!

Horse Quality: How come players never have to deal with those stubborn horses or those stupid animals that give riders trouble. Use the rules presented here to provide flavorful horse attributes.

Employing Craft and Service NPCs: What is a decent wage? How much will it cost to hire sailors to crew my ship? If you have ever wondered how much NPCs should charge for goods and services, use the guidelines presented here.

Effects of Aging: The PC is 79 years old and is able to put any 20 year old to same!? Here are guidelines that will help you enforce the effects of aging (including possibly dying of old age).

Fear and Influence Attacks: The next time a PC fails his RR, here are some guidelines to help you decide to deal with "influenced" PCs.

Extreme Cold: These guidelines can be used whenever the PCs decide to tackle the frozen wastes. It includes guidelines for Wind Chill Factor, damage from heat loss, and a few other odds and ends.

19.1 OBSERVATIONS ON MARTIAL ARTS

Many GMs believe that martial arts in Rolemaster is unbalanced when compared to other forms of attacks. This section will examine this and point out ways to make sure that martial arts does not get out of balance in your game.

Note: *When referring to martial artists, we are actually referring to the Warrior Monk or the Monk—not the martial artist training package.*

19.1.1 MASTER CHARACTER TABLE

When examining whether or not the martial artist is balanced with the other professions, examine the Master Character Table (T-5.8, page 334 in *RMSR*). This table was created with the intent of maximizing offense and defense of characters (this does not assume any ranks from Training Packages or Hobbies, but does assume Adolescent ranks). Let's examine the Fighter and the Warrior Monk.

The Fighter has an OB of 50 in his primary weapon, the Warrior Monk has an OB of 25. The Fighter has a DB of 30 (from a shield) and the Warrior Monk has a DB of only 25 (from Qu and Adrenal Defense). That gives the fighter a combined OB/DB of 80; the Warrior Monk has only 50. It seems that the fighter has the advantage at first level.

At fifth level, the Fighter has an OB of 95, the Warrior Monk has an OB of 70 (more equitable). The Fighter still has a DB of 30 (from his shield), the Warrior Monk has a DB of 74 (as his Adrenal Defense keeps going up). That gives the Fighter a combined OB/DB of 125; The Warrior Monk has 144. The Warrior Monk seems to be ahead.

At tenth level, the Fighter has a combined OB/DB of 152 (barely above the Warrior Monk at 5th level); while the Warrior Monk has continued to rise up to 202. The trend continues all the way up, with the Warrior Monk pulling even further ahead at higher levels (though the growth decreases due to diminishing returns on the higher ranks).

On the surface, it appears that the arguments that Martial Artists are superior to ordinary Fighters.

19.1.2 DEVELOPMENT POINTS

The average first level character has 66 DPs. When potentials have been reached, the average character has 85 DPs. Let's see how many DPs the Fighter spends to increase his abilities, versus the Warrior Monk.

To get the OB listed in the Master Character Table, you must choose a race that has at least two weapon ranks for Adolescence (most races have this), and develop two ranks during Apprenticeship. That gives a rank bonus of +20. The Fighter gets +20 because of his Profession Bonus, and +10 from stats. That's a total DP expense of 6 (less than 10% of the available DPs).

The Warrior Monk is more limited. No race has Martial Arts in Adolescent development; thus, they can only get two ranks during Apprenticeship. That is a rank bonus of +10; a +15 from profession bonus; and +0 from stats (the Warrior Monk's prime stats do not include St or Ag). To get the maximum possible effect, you will develop two ranks in each of Degree 1, 2, 3, and 4. In addition, the Warrior Monk must purchase two ranks of Adrenal Defense. That's a total DP expenditure of 34 (half the total available).

At later levels, the Fighter can diversify into many different kinds of weapons (or just different types of the same attack) and can get fancy with Combat Maneuvers and Special Attacks. The Warrior Monk will consistently be spending more than twice the DPs (up to five times).

For DP expenditure it seems obvious that the Warrior Monk is on the losing end. He will be spending half his DPs to keep his advantage. But perhaps this is not significant if you just look at the combat abilities (some character do not want anything but offense and defense).

IN THE FRAY

Ok, let's put a tenth level Fighter against a tenth level Warrior Monk in a combat. They start within sight of each other. The Fighter (because of having more available DPs), probably has two shots with a bow before the Warrior Monk can close to do his attacks. An important note is that Adrenal Defense is halved against Missile Fire. In addition, movement is slowed if the Warrior Monk chooses to parry against the missile fire (giving the Fighter more shots). Ok, a handful of concussion damage and maybe an A critical hit later, the melee begins.

Looking at the attack tables, the maximum concussion damage a Warrior Monk can do is 10 hits (the Fighter can do up to 30 hits). The Warrior Monk does his first critical at 103 (the Fighter is at 85). Presuming average rolls, the Fighter will have an advantage in concussion his, but the Warrior Monk has an advantage in crits. This is important because of the penalties from being wounded. If the Warrior Monk looses 25% of his hits first, his OB drops.

9.1.3 OTHER OPPONENTS

As we have already observed, a Warrior Monk loses some of his effectiveness against missile fire. However, there is another type of opponent that will shred Martial Artists... animal attacks. Examining any of the Animal Attack Tables will reveal that AT 1 is just about the worst AT to have when facing a claw or bite attack.

In addition, if facing any form of Undead, Warrior Monks are out of luck. Most Undead drain Co upon touch and Martial Artists have no ranged attacks. In addition, some foes require magic weapons to hit them... not that much available for Warrior Monks.

19.1.4 BONUS ITEMS

This leads to the next issue: Bonus Items. While it is common that Fighters (or anyone) have access to bonus items, great care should be used when giving out items to Martial Artists. Every time you give out an item, it gives them that much more edge. When giving out bonus items, make sure that the items for Martial Artists are non-magical in nature (do not let them have a "magical" attack).

Especially, do not give out items that award DB or blanket AT (e.g., Ring of AT 9, etc.). If you allow such things, Martial Artists will quickly dominate your game and you will loose control.

19.2 THE SINKING SHIP

You are awakened from your fitful sleep by the crashing of heavy wooden timbers.

Panic seizes you! You grab your backpack full of gear and scramble for the deck of the ship. The hold is already two feet deep in water as you slosh towards the ladder. You must be the last one in the bowels of the ship, as the hold is ominously quiet. A rat swims from one shadow to the next.

The ladder rungs are slick from other wet feet that have climbed up. On the deck, the first glints of the sunrise are becoming visible. The body of the captain is laying in a pool of blood on the deck. One of the two skiffs is missing. The other has been smashed.

You scan the horizon. No sign of a coastline....

Introduction

There are many reasons for the characters to be on a sinking ship. Some of these might include the characters sinking the ship themselves (either on purpose or by accident), an attacking pirate ship could have damaged the character's ship enough to cause it to start taking water, perhaps some unforeseen nautical anomaly has struck the ship, etc.

At this point, the GM can say—"You all cling to the rubble of the ship, and then swim ashore...." The characters lose some equipment, but they survive. If this were the case, the players never feel like there is any danger to their characters (though their equipment is threatened or lost). As a matter of fact, many players will complain about the loss of equipment!

A better approach would be to make the players feel lucky to have survived; much less retrieved any of their equipment. This can be achieved by imposing a feeling of danger on the players. What better way to make the players a little afraid than make them feel that the fate of their character is keyed to a die roll! What this article examines provides are some guidelines to remember when the party is on a sinking ship. In addition, a table is provided showing some typical debris left over from a sinking ship.

Defining the Stage

Basically there are two different types of sinking ship scenarios: one where the ship is near a coastline and one where the ship is not. As a GM, you need to decide how you want the characters to be rescued. Examine the upcoming events of the current story to aid in this decision. For example, if the characters need to be in a certain city to witness some event, they should not be stranded on an island. However, if the story calls for the characters to visit a foreign city, being rescued by a passing merchant ship might be just the thing!

When describing the sinking ship, be sure and mention the good stuff that was on the ship going down with the ship. This will prepare the characters for the potential of losing some of their equipment.

Near a Coast

If the characters are close to a coast line, they will probably attempt to rescue themselves. Use the rules for Swimming skill to determine the fate of characters who are trying to swim to shore. If the characters are jumping ship and not staying near the wreckage, simply have them make a Swimming maneuver to get to shore.

However, if the characters are attempting to linger near the wreckage (in hopes of finding something for flotation devices), roll on the Sinking Ship Chart to determine the fate of the character.

Finally, don't forget the distance the characters need to swim IS NOT the distance to the shore. It is the distance to shallow water (water shallow enough to stand in). Sometimes, the water is quite shallow for up to 50 yards from the actual shore.

See the Special Notes below for some other guidelines.

Open Sea

If the characters are not within sight of land, their plight becomes a different one—survival until rescued!

This means that Swimming will probably be necessary (if for no other reason than to tread water). If the character wants to swim from the wreckage while the ship goes down, simply have him make a Swimming maneuver to get away from the wreckage (failure means the character must roll on the Sinking Ship Table). If the character is willing to stay near the sinking ship (in hopes of finding a flotation device), he must roll on the Sinking Ship Chart.

See the Special Notes below for further guidelines.

Special Notes

1. You must calculate how much weight a character is trying to carry while swimming. Give the character a penalty of -10 for each 10% of his body weight he is trying to carry. For example, a 180 pound character can carry 18 pounds of equipment without suffering a penalty. However, if he is carrying 50 pounds of equipment, he will suffer a -30 to his swimming maneuver (in addition to any other penalties).
2. All Swimming maneuvers in and around a sinking ship should suffer a -20 penalty due to debris constantly and suddenly surfacing. This penalty should not apply to characters who are simply attempting to get away from the wreckage.
3. All rolls on the Sinking Ship Chart (below) should not be modified! In addition, certain results may need to be modified (in description) to reflect the nature of the ship and its cargo.
4. All spell casting attempts while in the water suffer at least a -25 penalty (for restricted movement) and require a spell casting static maneuver. This penalty could be more severe if the conditions in the water are more severe.

5. Any equipment that is put on floating debris has a 25% chance per hour of sliding off (modified up by the roughness of the water and down by attempts to secure it to the debris). Any equipment that is not carried or secured onto floating debris is lost. If there is some possibility that a piece of equipment could float, the GM should assign a possibility that the piece of equipment stayed afloat (starting at 50% and modifying for situation).
6. See the rules for Starvation and Dehydration for rules on how long characters can survive without food and water.

SINKING SHIP CHART

d100	Descriptions
≤ -101	You are pulled back into the wreckage of the ship! You begin to drown.
-100 – -46	Your clothing is tangled in the anchor chain! Make a -100 Swimming maneuver to keep from drowning. At the first failure, begin drowning rules.
-45 – -11	Your leg is caught in the some of the rigging tackle! Make a -50 Swimming maneuver to keep above the water; or a -50 maneuver roll to break free.
-10 – -1	You are tangled in a net. Make a -20 Swimming maneuver to keep above the water; or a -20 maneuver to break free.
0 – 30	Your break free of the wreckage. But there is nothing around you to help you float. You must tread water (see rules for swimming).
31 – 40	You find a wooden plank to cling to.
41 – 50	A cabin door surfaces near you.
51 – 60	A heavy wooden chair floats by.
61 – 70	A table rises to the surface next to you.
71 – 80	You find a scrap of sailcloth and are able to create an air bubble in the cloth and use it to stay afloat.
81 – 90	A piece of the mast floats by.
91 – 100	A small, empty cask pops up from the deep.
101 – 110	A partially full cask of water comes up underneath you.
111 – 130	A partially full barrel of food floats by.
131 – 160	One of the skiffs was not pulled down in the wreckage. Unfortunately it is overturned, but it is floating near you.
161 – 200	A skiff has broken free from the wreckage and is drifting near you!
≥ 201	One of the sailors has salvaged a skiff and is collecting nearby survivors! He has limited amounts of food and water in the skiff!

SWIMMING RULES

If the characters are close to a coast line, they may attempt to rescue themselves. The two main questions that must be answered are: can the characters swim well enough to make it to shore and how far is it to shore?

Difficulty of the Swim

Have the characters who want to try and swim to shore make maneuver rolls. The difficulty of the maneuver roll should be determined by the roughness of the water.

Calm ..... Easy
Small waves ..... Medium
Medium waves ..... Hard
Large waves ..... Very Hard
Strong Undertow ..... +1 level of difficulty
Floating Device ..... -1 level of difficulty
Towing Something ..... +1 level of difficulty

Swimming Skill Modifications

A character can swim without penalty carrying up to 10% of his body weight in equipment. For each increment of 10% of body weight that the character is carrying, the swimming roll will have a -10 modifier. If the character is wearing very loose-fitting clothing, there is a further -25 penalty to the swimming roll.

Distance Covered

The amount of distance covered by a successful swimming roll is based upon how good of a swimmer the character is. If the character has a negative Swimming skill (after armor modifications), a successful maneuver simply means the character was able to stay afloat for another 2-20 minutes. For characters who have a positive Swimming skill (after armor modifications), a maneuver will result in some distance being covered. The base distance covered is equal to 10 times the character's skill bonus in yards (e.g., a Swimming skill of 15 will result in a base distance of 150 yards). Multiply this base distance by the percentage movement generated on the Moving Maneuvering Table.

It will take a 2-20 rounds to cover the distance generated by the maneuver. However, the better a character is at swimming the faster he can travel the distance. Divide the character's skill bonus by 10 and subtract that from the time it would have normally taken. For example, if the normal time would have been 12 rounds, a character with a 50 skill in Swimming would be able to cover that in 7 rounds.

Exhaustion

While swimming for shore (or just trying to stay afloat), characters will tire. Use the table below to determine how many exhaustion points are expended each round of swimming (the difficulty on the left is the final adjusted difficulty of the swimming maneuver).

Easy Maneuver ..... 1 every 2 rounds
Medium Maneuver 1/round
Hard Maneuver 5/round
Very Hard Maneuver 10/round
Ex. Hard Maneuver 20/round
Sheer Folly Maneuver 30/round
Absurd Maneuver 50/round

If the character runs out of exhaustion points in the middle of a maneuver, the maneuver is completed, and then the character collapses on shore (if the shore was reached)

19.3 HORSE QUALITY

You glace over at Calego. He is riding with his head held high, just as a knight should. How is it that his horse is so well behaved? How come you always have to struggle to keep your horse on the road and not off in the pasture grazing? Why do the knights get the smartest horses?

Introduction

In most fantasy role playing games, the majority of the world travels from place to place on horseback. Because horses are so intimate in the day-to-day lives of the PCs, it would be nice if horses had personality. Here are some guidelines on how to create some flavor for them.

There are three things that make a horse unique: intelligence, physical appearance, and personality (or habits). Each of these items is discussed below.

Intelligence

Horses (like most animals) have varying levels of intelligence. Some horses are much quicker to learn than others. This can be represented by giving a horse a "stat" that represents his intelligence. For any given horse, roll 10d10 (not open-ended). This is the horse's Intelligence. This will result in most horses having an Intelligence of 55 (to compare this with a person, half the number and compare it to the person's Re or Me stat).

If the parents of the horse are not known, the horse gains a +5 to his Intelligence if purchased in a location known for better horses (usually cities). If the horse is purchased in a very rural community, he will have a -5 modifier to his Intelligence roll.

If the parents of the horse are known, the horse gains a +5 to his Intelligence for each parent with an Intelligence greater than 65. Likewise, the horse has a -5 to his Intelligence for each parent with an Intelligence less than 45.

It should be noted that the type of horse (draft horse, war horse, etc.) has little bearing upon the horse's intelligence. However, if there is a particularly intelligent breed of horse in a gaming world, the GM should feel free to modify its Intelligence by up to +5.

Physical Appearance

There are many characteristics that define the physical nature of a horse. These include height (usually measured in hands—a measurement equal to approximately 4"), color, and musculature (this includes the weight of the horse). Each of these attributes will be discussed below.

Color: Most breeds of horse are a single color, with color variation only on the mane/tail and/or "socks" (the hair on the lower leg around the hoof). However, there are specific breeds of horse known for their dual colored nature (e.g., the pinto). A GM should determine the most common coloration for each breed, and then determine what possible variation can occur within the breed. When a color is needed, roll 2d10 and consult the chart below.

HORSE COLORATION CHART

Roll	Coloration Notes
2	Unusual coloration
3 – 4	Unusual coloration (normal mane/tail)
5 – 7	Normal except for mane/tail
8 – 14	Normal coloration
15 – 17	Normal except for "socks"
18 – 19	Unusual coloration (normal "socks")
20	Unusual coloration

Musculature: How strong a horse is determines a lot about its abilities. Stronger horses can carry heavier loads and make stronger attacks (given as a modifier to their standard OB). The stronger the horse is, the heavier it is. To determine the weight of a horse, roll d100 (open-ended), apply the modifiers shown below, and use the chart that is most appropriate for the breed of horse.

HORSE WEIGHT CHART

Roll	Donkey Weight	Capacity	Mule OB Mod.	Mule Weight	Mule Capacity	Mule OB. Mod
less than -25	300 pounds	180 pounds	-20	360 pounds	270 pounds	-20
-25 – 05	350 pounds	210 pounds	-15	420 pounds	315 pounds	-15
06 – 15	400 pounds	240 pounds	-10	480 pounds	360 pounds	-10
16 – 35	450 pounds	270 pounds	-5	540 pounds	405 pounds	-5
36 – 65	500 pounds	300 pounds	+0	600 pounds	450 pounds	+0
66 – 85	550 pounds	330 pounds	+5	660 pounds	495 pounds	+5
86 – 95	600 pounds	360 pounds	+10	720 pounds	540 pounds	+10
96 – 125	650 pounds	390 pounds	+15	780 pounds	585 pounds	+15
more than 125	700 pounds	420 pounds	+20	840 pounds	630 pounds	+20

Donkey Modifiers:
Per hand over 18 hands (height) = +5
Per hand under 18 hands (height) = -5

Mule Modifiers:
Per hand over 20 hands (height) = +5
Per hand under 20 hands (height) = -5

HORSE WEIGHT CHART (CONTINUED)

Roll	Pony Weight	Pony Capacity	Pony OB Mod.	Mustang Weight	Mustang Capacity	Mustang OB Mod.
Less than -25	300 pounds	100 pounds	-20	480 pounds	130 pounds	-20
-25 – 05	350 pounds	120 pounds	-15	560 pounds	160 pounds	-15
06 – 15	400 pounds	140 pounds	-10	640 pounds	190 pounds	-10
16 – 35	450 pounds	160 pounds	-5	720 pounds	220 pounds	-5
36 – 65	500 pounds	180 pounds	+0	800 pounds	250 pounds	+0
66 – 85	550 pounds	200 pounds	+5	880 pounds	280 pounds	+5
86 – 95	600 pounds	220 pounds	+10	960 pounds	310 pounds	+10
96 – 125	650 pounds	240 pounds	+15	1,040 pounds	340 pounds	+15
more than 125	700 pounds	260 pounds	+20	1,100 pounds	370 pounds	+20

Pony Modifiers:
Per hand over 14 hands (height) = +5
Per hand under 13 hands (height) = -5

Mustang Modifiers:
Per hand over 19 hands (height) = +5
Per hand under 19 hands (height) = -5

Roll	Quarterhorse/Thoroughbred Weight	Quarterhorse/Thoroughbred Capacity	Quarterhorse/Thoroughbred OB Mod.	Plowhorse/Warhorse Weight	Plowhorse/Warhorse Capacity	Plowhorse/Warhorse OB. Mod
less than -25	600 pounds	130 pounds	-20	730 pounds	240 pounds	-20
-25 – 05	700 pounds	160 pounds	-15	860 pounds	280 pounds	-15
06 – 15	800 pounds	190 pounds	-10	990 pounds	320 pounds	-10
16 – 35	900 pounds	220 pounds	-5	1,120 pounds	360 pounds	-5
36 – 65	1,000 pounds	250 pounds	+0	1,250 pounds	400 pounds	+0
66 – 85	1,100 pounds	280 pounds	+5	1,380 pounds	440 pounds	+5
86 – 95	1,200 pounds	310 pounds	+10	1,510 pounds	480 pounds	+10
96 – 125	1,300 pounds	340 pounds	+15	1,640 pounds	520 pounds	+15
more than 125	1,400 pounds	370 pounds	+20	1,770 pounds	560 pounds	+20

Quarterhorse/Thoroughbred Modifiers:
Per hand over 23 hands (height) = +10
Per hand under 23 hands (height) = -10

Plowhorse/Warhorse:
Per hand over 23 hands = +5
Per hand under 23 hands = -5

HORSE HEIGHT CHART

Roll	Donkey/Mule Height	Roll	Pony Height	Roll	Mustang Height
less than -25	13 hands (4'4")	less than -25	10 hands (3'4")	less than -25	16 hands (5'4")
-25 – 05	14 hands (4'8")	-25 – 05	11 hands (3'8")	-25 – 05	17 hands (5'8")
06 – 15	15 hands (5')	06 – 25	12 hands (4')	06 – 35	18 hands (6')
16 – 25	16 hands (5'4")	26 – 50	13 hands (4'4")	36 – 65	19 hands (6'4")
26 – 35	17 hands (5'8")	51 – 75	14 hands (4'8")	66 – 95	20 hands (6'8")
36 – 65	18 hands (6')	76 – 95	15 hands (5')	96 – 125	21 hands (7')
66 – 75	19 hands (6'4")	96 – 125	16 hands (5'4")	more than 125	22 hands (7'4")
76 – 85	20 hands (6'8")	more than 125	17 hands (5'8")		
86 – 95	21 hands (7')				
96 – 125	22 hands (7'4")				
more than 125	23 hands (7'8")				

Donkey/Mule Modifiers:
Mule = +25
Per donkey parent over 18 hands = +5
Per donkey parent under 18 hands = -5
Per mule parent over 20 hands = +5
Per mule parent under 20 hands = -5

Pony Modifiers:
Per parent over 14 hands = +20
Per parent under 13 hands = -20

Mustang Modifier:
Per parent over 19 hands = +15
Per parent under 19 hands = -15

Roll	Qhorse/Whorse Height	Roll	Plowhorse/Thoroughbred Height
less than -25	20 hands (6'8")	less than -25	19 hands (6'4")
-25 – 05	21 hands (7')	-25 – 05	20 hands (6'8")
06 – 35	22 hands (7'4")	06 – 20	21 hands (7')
36 – 65	23 hands (7'8")	21 – 35	22 hands (7'4")
66 – 95	24 hands (8')	36 – 50	23 hands (7'8")
96 – 125	25 hands (8'4")	51 – 65	24 hands (8')
more than 125	26 hands (8'8")	66 – 80	25 hands (8'4")
		81 – 95	26 hands (8'8")
		96 – 125	27 hands (9')
		more than 125	28 hands (9'4")

QHorse/WHorse Modifiers:
Per parent over 23 hands = +10
Per parent under 23 hands = -10

Plowhorse/Thoroughbred Modifiers:
Per parent over 24 hands = +10
Per parent under 23 hands = -10

Height: The actual height of horse depends on its breed. However, there is sometimes a great variance even within the same breed. Remember that height is measured to the shoulder of the horse. To determine the height to the top of a horse's head, add one-fourth again as many hands (e.g., an 20 hand horse would be 25 hands to the head). As a guide, typical "real-life" horse breeds are shown above. Roll d100 (open-ended), apply the modifiers shown above, and use the chart that is most appropriate for the breed of horse.

Personality and Habits

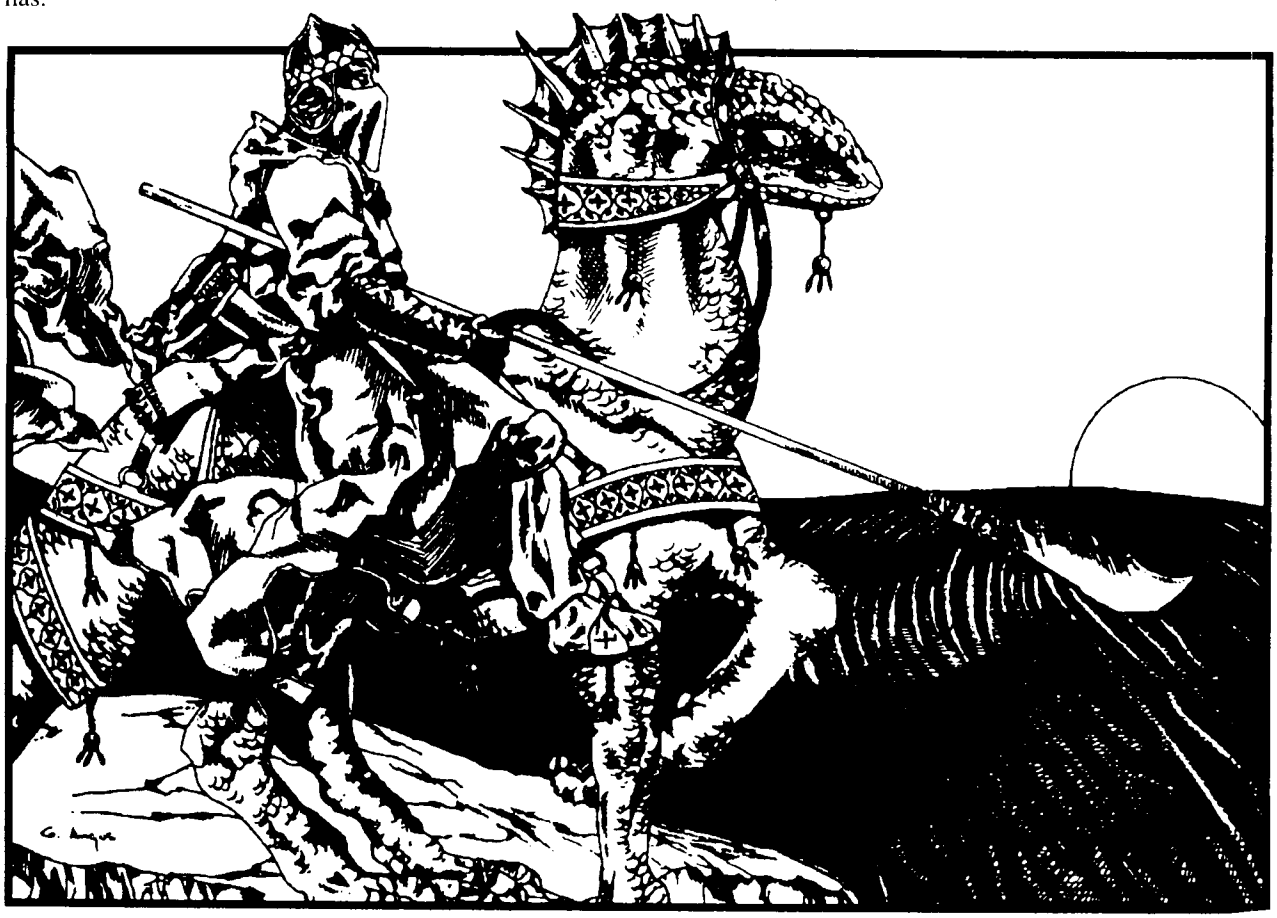
Every horse has at least one unusual trait that helps make it unique. When generating traits for a horse, roll d10 and consult the chart below to see how many traits the horse has.

NUMBER OF TRAITS CHART

Roll	Number of Traits
1 – 6	One Trait
7 – 9	Two Traits
10+	Three Traits

Modifiers:
Per parent with two or more traits: +1

Once you know how many traits the horse has, roll d100 (open-ended) for each trait and consult the Horse Traits Chart. Traits should not be revealed to the character/owner of the horse until such a time as they become obvious (an Animal Handling or Animal Training maneuver might reveal a trait).



HORSE TRAITS CHART

Roll	Trait
less than -25	**Lies down.** This horse sleeps lying down (almost all horses sleep standing up).
-24 – 05	**Allergies.** The GM should select some plant that the horse is allergic to. When the horse gets near that plant, he will get sick (-5 per day around the plant). Penalties affect riding maneuvers, as well as the horse's own maneuvers.
06 – 09	**Sickly.** This horse has a very delicate stomach. If he does not eat exactly the same kind of food every day, he will get sick. For every day of sickness, the horse must make an RR (using an attack level equal to the number of days he has been sick). If this RR fails, the horse dies. If the RR succeeds by more than 50, he is no longer sick.
10 – 13	**Won't Pull.** This horse does not like to pull anything. When hitched to a something to pull, all maneuvers are made with a -50 penalty.
14 – 17	**Won't Carry.** This horse does not like to carry things. Anytime a total weight exceeding 10% of the horse's weight is placed on the horse, the horse will buck and kick and do whatever it can to remove the load from his back.
18 – 21	**Sensitive Feet.** This horse has sensitive feet and will kick, bite, and do whatever it can to keep people from touching his feet. If shod, this horse will have to be reshod every d10 days (as he works at getting his shoes off).
22 – 26	**Sensitive Ears.** This horse has very sensitive ears. Touching his ears will result in bucking, kicking, and biting. When putting a bridle over this horse's head, roll d100 and add your Animal Handling skill bonus. If this roll is successful, the maneuver did not touch the horse's ears. If this maneuver fails, the horse's ears were touched and the bridle is not on the horse. Otherwise, the horse's ears were touched and the bridle is now on the horse.
27 – 31	**Kicker.** This horse kicks out at anything behind him (other horses, wagons, people, etc.).
32 – 35	**Nervous.** This horse spooks easily. All riding rolls are at a permanent -10 penalty. In addition, this horse is likely to bolt (jumping and/or running directly away) from a sudden movement in the natural environment (GM should roll d100 and add +25; if the result is over 100, the horse bolts).
36 – 39	**Stubborn.** This horse has his own ideas about what it should do. To make the horse do something that it does not want to do, the rider must make a Riding maneuver with a special -25 penalty.
40 – 43	**Unfriendly.** This horse doesn't like people. He will bite, bump, and occasionally kick at people who are near him. If ridden, this horse will not necessarily buck the rider off, but might rub up against fences/trees and walk under low branches to get the rider off.
44 – 47	**Scratcher.** This horse likes to scratch. He will take every opportunity to rub against fences, trees, etc. The horse disregards any rider while scratching.
48 – 51	**Sense of Humor.** This horse likes to play. When drinking, he will allow others to get close, then splash them (by tossing his head at the water). He will perform similar antics with food. If very intelligent, he might learn other tricks.
52 – 55	**Saddlewise.** This horse doesn't like riders. When a saddle is placed on his back, he will inhale deeply (expanding his chest) before the saddle is cinched. When the rider gets into the saddle, he will exhale, loosening the saddle. At some inopportune moment, the saddle will slip to the side, dumping the rider.
56 – 59	**Impatient.** This horse doesn't like to stand still for very long. If something is keeping him from continuously moving (e.g., a rider), he will get nervous. After d10 minutes of standing still, he will begin to walk in place (a Riding maneuver at -10 to make him stop). After d10 minutes of walking in place, he will begin to move around (a Riding maneuver at -25 to make him only walk in place).
60 – 64	**Friendly.** This horse likes people. He is easy to ride (special +5 bonus to all Riding maneuvers) and never bites or kicks.
65 – 69	**Easy to Ride.** This horse likes riders. All Riding maneuvers have an extra +10 bonus.
70 – 74	**Easy to Train.** This horse picks up tricks easily. All Animal Training maneuvers have an extra +10 bonus.
75 – 79	**Athletic.** This horse is athletically inclined. Any maneuvers that it makes have a special bonus of +10.
80 – 84	**Runner.** This horse likes to run. Riding maneuver rolls must be made to keep the horse from running at every opportunity.
85 – 88	**Competitive Runner.** This horse like to run, and be in front of every other horse that is running. He gains a special +10 bonus to any running maneuvers for each other horse running with him.
89 – 92	**Curious and clever.** This horse likes to fiddle with things. He will figure out how to operate most gates within a day or so. He will push, pull, bite, and bump on things to see what happens.
93 – 95	**Long winded.** This horse has triple the normal number of exhaustion points (see C&M, page 9 for creature exhaustion points).
96 – 125	**Hauler.** This horse has a special bonus of +25 to all maneuvers involving pulling objects.
more than 125	**Carrier.** This horse has double the normal carrying capacity.

19.4 EMPLOYING CRAFT AND SERVICE NPCS

Kirian scanned the faces in the bar. He needed a reliable messenger to deliver his notice to the Company. He hefted his pouch. He had enough coin, but who would be reliable.

INTRODUCTION

In the life of any character, there comes a time when he must employ an NPC to do something: repair armor, research a topic, load the wagon, carry a message, etc. What is a reasonable price to pay for such services? This section provides guidelines for how much services might cost in a typical fantasy setting. In addition, some guidelines on service reliability are provided.

19.4.1 TYPICAL COSTS

When employing NPCs, there are two types of employment (at least for our purposes here): crafts and services. Crafts are defined as any job that results in a new product (e.g., employing a leather worker to make you a pair of boots, or a haberdasher to create a hat). A service is defined as a job that does not result in the creation of a new product (e.g., a armorer repairing a suit of armor, or a crier to make an announcement).

CRAFTS

In most places (in typical fantasy settings), mass production is not practiced (or possible). Thus, most purchased objects are made on commission. If the demand for an object is relatively high, a crafter might make a few dozen of the objects to have around. In addition, crafting trades are often guilded (which further affects the cost of goods made).

When a person is commissioned to create a new product, simply use the normal cost of the item. The only exceptions to this are if the object is not normally made by the crafter (e.g., a boot worker commissioned to make a belt pouch), or if the item has to be specially constructed (e.g., a pair of boots made from this alligator hide, not the normal goat hide).

If the object is not normally made by the crafter, the cost for the product should be about 10-50% higher than that listed. This represents the fact that the crafter rarely has all of the materials on hand to complete a project of this type (e.g., a boot maker would have the leather for a belt pouch, but would not have them pieces cut to the right sizes; he also would have to have the right kind of buckles and/or clasps). If the object has special requirements, the customer is expected to pay for the unusual materials (or provide them). In addition, the cost should be increased by 50-100% (representing the special care that must be taken in the labor).

There is one other factor that affects the cost of a crafted item: whether the craft used to build the item falls under the jurisdiction a guild. It is important to remember that guilds were formed to help restrict the free flow of information about a particular craft. Thus, silversmiths might form a guild to prevent everyone from learning their skill. In return, this provided a structured environment for learning the skills as well as a great mechanism for controlling prices.

An important factor to remember is that unless the crafter is "guilded," he only makes money when he sells goods. Some guilds might provide their members with security against the bad times by using guild money to "pay" crafters a minimum amount during this time. However, this shouldn't be common and many regulations would have to be in place to prevent abuse of such activity.

REPAIR WORK

This work is similar to crafted work, except that no new product is the result. Instead, an old product is "repaired" or changed in some fashion. In this case, the guidelines for services (below) should be used; except that the employer is usually expected to pay for the cost of any goods needed in the repair work.

SERVICES

Services are further classified into four types: unskilled, skilled, tradesman, and professional. Of these four, unskilled and skilled are grouped because the amount of money made is relatively fixed. Tradesman and professional services are different in that the more trained a person is, the more he can charge for the service.

> **Note:** *Most wages are given in terms of a day. A day in this case is considered approximately 10 hours of work (with a break around meal time). A GM should decide exactly what services fall under which category in his world. For example, in some worlds, a sailor may be a Skilled service, but in others it may be a Tradesman service.*

An unskilled service includes any service for which there is no specific skill needed. Types of work that might fall into this category would mostly be simple laborers (ditch diggers, porters, etc.). An unskilled person should make barely enough to pay for a day's worth of food (and maybe some crude lodging). Assuming the standard prices (presented in Section 13.0), an unskilled person should make 1 to 2 cp per day of work.

A skilled service includes any service for which there is a specific skill needed, and that skill is relatively easy to learn. Types of work that might fall into this category is sailing, messenger, etc. A skilled person should make enough money to feed himself and his family (and pay for some simple lodging). Assuming the standard prices of goods and services, a skilled person should make 1 to 10 cp per day (with the more skilled person making more money).

However, both unskilled and skilled persons have no guarantee that they will work from day to day. They are only employed as long as there is a need for their skill. An unskilled laborer has only a 20% chance of working on any given day (this can be modified by -50 to +30 based upon previous day's work, activities taken by the worker, and the likelihood of work being available). For a skilled worker, at the end of any given day, a skilled worker should make a maneuver roll modified by his skill (with another -50 to +30 modification based upon the previous day's work results and the likelihood of work being available). If the maneuver is successful, there will be work the next day.



Tradesman types of services are those that are usually learned through an apprenticeship and/or a long period working with a trade. This might include servants, bodyguards, etc. Tradesman services are keyed to the ability of the worker. Assuming the standard prices of goods and services, a "good" tradesman should make enough wages to feed himself and his family (figure approximately six people), house himself and his family, and pay any appropriate taxes. There should rarely be any extra. Under the normal pricing structure, the might translate to approximately 3 cp per rank per day (e.g., a person with 10 ranks would make approximately 30 cp per day).

Professional types of services are those that require a lot of formal training (and that training may be regulated by some kind of agency; regardless, this training usually requires many years to complete). This might include lawyers, navigators, etc. Professional services are general significantly more expensive, but are again keyed to the ability of the worker. Assuming the standard prices of goods and services, a professional should make approximately 6 to 15 cp per rank per day. Remember that a professional has to maintain a more extravagant life-style and generally has some kind of professional equipment he must maintain (and might have some professional organization "dues" to pay). Remember that the difference between the rich and the poor is usually quite large (historically), and this pricing structure supports that view. If the difference between the rich and the poor is not so significant in a particular gaming world, the GM will want to lower the prices paid to professionals (rather than raise the prices paid to other types of workers).

Tradesmen and Professionals have the advantage in that they are sometimes guilded. The security provided by the guild is usually shared work (so that everyone gets some work), resulting in fewer "lean" times. However, most guilds require some kind of fee or tax (taking money out of the pocket of the worker).

19.4.2 RELIABILITY

Whenever a service is commissioned (or performed), the GM should determine what actually happens with the service. When work is commissioned, the GM should make a maneuver roll for the NPC providing the service. This roll is modified by the character's skill at performing the service. The total result is how well the service or work was performed.

When dealing with a craft, the actual nature of the product may not be immediately evident. For example, it might not be obvious that there is one brittle spot on a saddle strap. Some crafters might even become adept at providing faulty goods so that they can remain in business repairing them!

19.5 EFFECTS OF AGING

The Queen sighed. She was getting old. Her body was finding it harder and harder to keep disease at bay. If only her alchemist would actually discover that elixir of youth... the potion that would keep her young.

Introduction

As a body ages, it becomes more susceptible to sickness and deterioration. This statement holds true for all but the "immortal" races (Elves and Orcs). For the immortal races, the body does not deteriorate as much as the soul does (the effects are similar enough to allow the mechanisms to work the same). By using the guidelines presented below, a GM can simulate the effects of aging in characters.

19.5.1 AGING ROLL

If a GM is having age affect a character, for each character the GM should make an Aging Roll once per game year after the character reaches the Age Category of "Old" (see the Age Modifier Chart for the exact age). It is most convenient to make the maneuver roll on the character's birthday. However, the results from the roll should be slowly integrated into the character's life over the course of the next twelve months.

An Aging Roll is comprised of: d100 (open-ended) – Disease Modifier (see below) – Age Modifier (see below) + Co stat bonus + Co stat bonus + SD stat bonus + Special (see below). The results are read on the Aging Chart.

Disease Modifier

For each week that the character suffered from disease during the previous year, the Aging Roll has a -1 modifier. For example, if the character suffered from a disease for 7 weeks during the last year, he would have a -7 modifier to his Aging Roll.

Age Modifier

Different races and/or cultures age differently. The GM should index the character's race in the chart below to determine what kind of age modifier the character should have (based upon the character's age).

Option: The GM may decide to start making Aging Rolls every year of a character's life (not just once he reaches the "Old" Age Category). If so, use the Young, Mature, and Middle-Age modifiers shown in the chart below.

Special Modifiers

The GM may decide to apply special modifiers to the Aging Maneuver Roll based upon the activities and/or precautions taken by the character during the previous year. All such modifiers are left entirely up to the GM's discretion.

AGING CHART

-26 or less	**Spectacular Failure:** This character gets sick (see below). In addition, this character suffers a stat loss in one physical stat (Ag, Co, Qu, SD, or St) and one mental stat (Em, In, Me, Pr, Re). Remember that if any temporary stat drops to 0, the character falls into a coma.
-5 to -25	**Absolute Failure:** This character gets sick (see below). In addition, this character suffers a stat loss. Roll d10. A result of 1 through 6 means the stat loss is in a physical stat (Ag, Co, Qu, SD, or St). A result of 7 through 10 means the stat loss is in a mental stat (Em, In, Me, Pr, Re). Remember that if any temporary stat drops to 0, the character falls into a coma.
-4 to 75	**Failure:** This character gets sick (see below).
UM 66	**Unusual Event:** This character suffers a stat loss. Roll d10. A result of 1 through 6 means the stat loss is in a physical stat (Ag, Co, Qu, SD, or St). A result of 7 through 10 means the stat loss is in a mental stat (Em, In, Me, Pr, Re). Remember that if any temporary stat drops to 0, the character falls into a coma.
76 to 90	**Partial Success:** This character gets sick (see below). However, this sickness is only temporary (lasting half the normal time).
UM 100	**Unusual Success:** This character suffers no effects from aging until he reaches the next age category. If he is already in the Very Ancient age category, he will not suffer any effects from aging for another 10 years.
91—110	**Near Success:** This character suffers no effects from aging this year.
111—175	**Success:** This character suffers no effects from aging this year and next year (i.e., no Aging Maneuver Roll is made for the next year).
176 up	**Absolute Success:** This character suffers no effects from aging this year and for the next 5 years.

Example: *Fredrick Kilraven was sick for 11 weeks during a year. He is a High Man who is 127 years old. His Constitution stat bonus is 6 and his Self Discipline stat bonus is 4. When he turn 128, the GM rolls for aging effects. The roll is 97 + 76 (open-ended roll) - 11 (for sickness) – 5 (Age Modifier for High Man) + 12 (Co bonus twice) + 4 (SD bonus) = 173; he is fine and healthy for this year and next year (i.e., he will not have to make another aging effects roll next year). If the roll had been 09, the net result would have been that Fredrick would get sick sometime during the next year.*

AGE MODIFIER CHART

Race	+50 Young	+20 Mature	+5 Middle-age	-5 Old	-15 V-Old	-30 Venerable	-50 Ancient	-75 V-Ancient
	Modifier/Age Category							
Hillman	0-12	13-24	25-49	50-57	58-65	66-73	74-79	80+
Mariner	0-23	24-46	47-94	95-121	122-148	149-175	176-189	190
Nomad	0-9	10-19	20-39	40-46	47-53	54-60	61-64	65
Ruralman	0-14	15-29	30-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
Urbanman	0-15	16-31	32-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+
Woodman	0-15	16-31	32-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85+
Highman	0-24	25-49	50-99	100-149	150-199	200-249	250-299	300+
Wood Elf	0-124	125-249	250-499	500-624	625-749	750-874	875-999	1000+
Grey Elf	0-124	125-249	250-499	500-624	625-749	750-874	875-999	1000+
High Elf	0-124	125-249	250-499	500-624	625-749	750-874	875-999	1000+
Half-elf (mortal)	0-62	63-124	125-249	250-319	320-379	380-439	440-499	500+
Half-elf (immortal)	0-124	125-249	250-499	500-624	625-749	750-874	875-999	1000+
Dwarf	0-49	50-99	100-199	200-249	250-299	300-349	350-399	400+
Halfling	0-22	23-44	45-89	90-94	95-99	100-104	105-109	110+
Common Orc	0-124	125-249	250-499	500-624	625-749	750-874	875-999	1000+
Greater Orc	0-124	125-249	250-499	500-624	625-749	750-874	875-999	1000+
Half-orc	0-62	63-124	125-249	250-319	320-379	380-439	440-499	500+

19.5.2 GETTING SICK

As a character ages, sickness is always a threat. When a result of "Sickness" is generated on the Aging Effects Chart, this means that the character might get sick during the next year.

The GM should make a Disease RR for the character. The level of the attack is 1 for every point below 100 on the total Aging Maneuver Roll. For example, a final Aging Maneuver Roll of 71 would result in a level 29 Disease.

The disease should be treated as a Bubonic disease (see Section 11.1 for more on diseases and recover times). If the recovery time for the disease is less than one week, the character will suffer no modifiers for next year's Aging Maneuver Roll. Also, if the disease is cured before a week has passed, the character will suffer no modifiers for next year's Aging Maneuver Roll.

Stat Loss

Whenever a stat loss occurs because of age, consult the chart below. The chart indicates how much a stat will decrease for the year (the GM should make all rolls secretly). The GM could have the loss spread out over many months, or have it occur all at once.

STAT LOSS FROM AGE CHART

Common Man	d5+1	Half-elf	d10
Mixed Man	d5+1	Dwarf	d5-1
High Man	d5+1	Halfling	d5-1
Wood Elf	d10	Common Orc	d5+1
Grey Elf	2d10-1	Greater Orc	d5+1
High Elf	2d10-1	Half-orc	d5+1

Stat loss from aging is temporary (and may be regained through level advancement). However, due to the age of the character, some GMs may rule that if a character simply spends 75% of the year in physical conditioning (or mental conditioning), he may make a stat gain roll to help overcome temporary stat loss. Remember that if a temporary stat drops to 0, the character falls into a coma.

However, temporary stats are not all that drops. For every three points that a temporary stat drops (due to a single Aging Roll), the potential for that stat drops by 1. Loss of potential is never regained. If a potential stat drops to 0 (due to an Aging Roll), the character has died of old age. If a character looses stats while in a coma (due to further Aging Rolls), the potential stat will drop by d10 (instead of 1 for every 3 points lost). If a potential stat is lowered below a temporary stat, the temporary stat automatically reduces to the same number as the new potential.

Coma

Whenever a temporary stat drops to 0, a character falls into a coma (see *RMSR* for more on reviving from coma). While in a coma, some means must be discovered to keep the body nourished (or it will die of malnutrition or dehydration). As long as the body can be kept alive, the character will not die. However, each full week that the character is in a coma is treated as a week of disease (for purposes of modifications to the next year's Aging Roll). This could result in further stat losses and will eventually result in a potential stat of 0.

19.6 FEAR AND INFLUENCE ATTACKS

This section will provide guidelines on how to handle various situations in which a PC is subjected to "fear" or other types of influencing attacks.

19.5.1 ROLE PLAYING INFLUENCE ATTACKS

There are two ways to "role play" influence type attacks. The type you use depends upon how many creative resources you have available when the situation comes up, and how well your players can play their character's knowledge separate from their own.

Simple Presentation

This method should only be used if you trust your players to keep player knowledge separate from character knowledge. Basically, you simply pull a player aside and inform him that he has been influenced. You should then rely upon him to role play the situation appropriately.

However, you have to remember that it is not an easy task for a player to pull this off completely. For example, if a character has been "charmed" (via a *Charm Kind* spell), the player could play his character as a friend to the NPC in question. However, when not directly involved with the NPC, the player would constantly have to struggle to not clue the other players into the fact that his character has been influenced.

Intense Presentation

This method is a lot harder to present to the players, but produces much more realistic results. When a character has been influenced by an NPC (or situation), the GM must present the situation in such a way as to create the influence in the player (which will translate into reactions for the character).

For example, if a character has just failed his fear RR, do not simply inform the player that his character is afraid. Portray the situation in such a way as to frighten the player! It really helps if you know the fears of the player(s) involved, as you can build them into the descriptions. For example, if there is an undead thing in the room and the party can only see its eyes (causing the Fear RR in the first place), describe the cold as picking at the flesh of the characters (maybe having everyone take a point of damage, just to enforce the effect). Describe whispers that are barely audible and yet somehow enticing. Describe the just barely visible spiders scuttling just out of the light. In the end, you will have the players ready to run; and the character will react in a similar fashion.

For other types of influences, you have to have intimate knowledge of the character's background and goals. When an NPC casts a *Charm Kind* spell on a party member, have the NPC recount some childhood incident that connects them personally to the PC. Remember that most types of influences are going to be magical in nature; and those that are not can use the same methods (rationalizing that characters simply hear what they want to hear). This type of influence is harder to maintain (as player's are usually very suspicious of NPCs). You may have to continually reinforce the influence with occasionally resurfacing memories.

19.5.2 MECHANICS OF INFLUENCE ATTACKS

All magical influence attacks should be handled through Resistance Rolls (non-magical attacks should use the Influence Static Maneuver Table T-4.8.13 in *RMSR*). To determine the exact effects of a successful influence attack (i.e., the victim failed his RR), you must know by how much the RR failed. Consult the most appropriate table below to find out the effects of the influence attack. The conditions generated by the charts below remain in effect until such a time as a new RR is called for (e.g., the character leaves the area and returns later, etc.). Note that some results indicate that another RR may be made.

FEAR / AWE ATTACK CHART

Fail by...	Result
01—10	**Minor Failure:** You may only operate at 75% activity (i.e., most actions will suffer a -25). Another RR may be attempted in d10 rounds.
11—25	**Mild Failure:** You may only operate at 50% activity (i.e., most actins will suffer a -50). Another RR may be attempted in d10 rounds (though this RR has a modification of -10).
26—50	**Moderate Failure:** You break and run from whatever caused the Fear RR. You will run for d10 rounds in a random direction (but always away from the source of the Fear RR). At the end of this time, you may approach the source again, but will suffer the same effects as the Mild Failure result above until a new RR is called for.
51 —100	**Severe Failure:** You are paralyzed with fear. You can perform no voluntary actions while in this state. Future RRs versus this specific attack have a modifier of -10 (until such a time as a successful RR versus this attack is made).
101+	**Extreme Failure:** You cannot handle it! Make another RR (versus the same attack that generated this one). If you fail this one, you suffer from a heart attack. If you succeed, you simply pass out from the fright (and cannot be roused for 2d10 rounds). Future RRs against this specific attack have a modifier of -50 (until such a time as a success RR versus this attack is made). Similar types of attacks have a modifier of -10 (until such a time as successful RR versus any similar attack is made).

CHARM ATTACK CHART

Fail by...	Result
01—10	**Minor Failure:** You believe the source of the attack is a friendly person from your past (though you may not have known the person personally; e.g., a friend of your father, etc.). You have no reason to believe this person would try to hurt you or your allies.
11—25	**Mild Failure:** You believe the source of the attack is a long, lost friend. Any attempts to disprove this are countered with ease. You and he regale in tales of old. You may make another RR in d10 days.
26—50	**Moderate Failure:** You believe the source of the attack is a long, lost best friend. You will defend him with any abilities that you possess and will side with him in any attempts to disprove his identity. You may make another RR in d10 days (but with a modification of -10).
51 —100	**Severe Failure:** You believe the source of the attack is your best friend. You are so excited to see him that you forget about your current companions. You will recount your deepest secrets to him. You may make another RR in d10 weeks.
101+	**Extreme Failure:** As Severe Failure, except you will automatically believe whatever he says. You may make another RR in d10 weeks (but with a modification of -10).

SUGGESTION ATTACK CHART

Fail by...	Result
01—10	**Minor Failure:** You find the request odd, but have no reason to deny it. If queried later, you will wonder why you did not question it sooner.
11—25	**Mild Failure:** The request is nothing unusual. You will remember the request and the person who made it, but will have to be convinced that it was anything but normal.
26—50	**Moderate Failure:** You will perform the requested action, but will have no memory of performing it. You will remember the person who made the request, but you will not remember actually performing the task.
51 —100	**Severe Failure:** You will perform the requested action, but will have no recollection of doing it. In addition, you will not even remember why you did it!
101+	**Extreme Failure:** As Severe Failure, except you will perform the task and believe you are doing something else. You might even be tricked into performing an action contradictory to your nature this way.



19.7 EXTREME COLD

The odds of surviving in the Northern Wastes are probably not as bad as you might think. Common sense, basic survival knowledge, and the will to live will increase your chances of survival. Learn to work with nature, not against it.

Players should keep a written record of their character's protections from cold: clothing, heat sources, spells, and/or shelters. Also, they should keep the records of concussion hits taken from cold damage and concussion hits taken from regular damage separate because each type is healed differently. However, both types of damage are to be combined when figuring a character's total damage. Finally, exhaustion should be carefully tracked while in artic temperatures.

19.7.1 WIND CHILL

When the temperature drops below 35° the wind begins to affect the effective temperature. Cross index the low temperature for the day (use the nearest value that is not less than the actual low temperature) with the average wind speed for the day (using the value that does not exceed the actual average wind speed). The result will reveal the modifier for the low temperature (resulting in an effective temperature for the day). Note that wind speeds less than 5 mph have no significant effect on the actual temperature.

19.7.2 HEAT LOSS

The following heat loss rules should be used when characters are in any polar setting. The following values are based upon 0 degrees of temperature and 20 mph winds (for a wind chill factor of -40 degrees). For other wind speeds or temperatures, add/subtract 5 hits for each increase/decrease of 10 degrees or 10 mph of wind speed.

A character will take 1 hit every 5 minutes if the character is awake (that is 12 hits per hour), or 1 hit every 15 minutes is the character is asleep (that is 4 hits per hour). This means that you do not heal hits by sleeping/resting while in artic conditions (unless you can negate cold damage). Modifiers to this figure are shown below.

In addition, a character will take exhaustion points at the minimum rate of 12 per hour while moving around (possibly more if actually travelling). While sitting still (but still awake), characters will take 4 exhaustion points per hour. All things that reduce hit loss will also help in exhaustion loss.

Natural Healing

Normally, hits lost from cold must be healed before other types of damage will heal (that is—the natural healing process). Cold damage will heal at the rate of 1 hit every 15 minutes that is spent in a warm environment. Healing spells and magical healing herbs (i.e., herbs that heal hits) have double effect on cold damage.

Shelter

Being in a shelter reduces hits taken by half (6 hits per hour if the character is awake, or 2 hits per hour if the character is asleep). Any spell that creates an air-tight barrier will have the same effect.

Heat

Anything that generates more heat than four torches will cut hit loss from cold damage in half. Characters must be within 3' of a small fire (normal campfire size), or within 10' of a large fire (bonfire size; includes *Wall of Fire* and/or Fire Elementals) to benefit from the fire's heat. Small fires can only warm two characters at a time. If more than two characters are trying to get warm, have all make moving maneuver rolls of Medium difficulty. The highest two results gain the heat benefits unless one or no results are over 100 (in which case only the results over 100 gain the benefits). A fire combined with a shelter will negate Hit loss from cold as long as the character is in the heated shelter.

WIND CHILL CHART

Wind Speed	Temperature 35	30	25	20	15	10	5	0	-5	-10	-15	-20
5	-2	-3	-3	-3	-4	-4	-4	-5	-6	-6	-7	-8
10	-14	-14	-16	-17	-18	-19	-20	-21	-22	-22	-22	-23
15	-19	-19	-24	-26	-26	-28	-30	-33	-35	-35	-36	-38
20	-23	-27	-29	-29	-32	-34	-37	-40	-41	-42	-43	-44
25	-28	-30	-32	-35	-37	-39	-42	-45	-47	-48	-50	-52
30	-30	-32	-36	-38	-41	-43	-46	-49	-51	-53	-55	-58
35	-32	-34	-38	-40	-42	-45	-48	-52	-55	-57	-60	-62
40	-33	-36	-40	-42	-44	-46	-50	-54	-57	-59	-61	-63
45	-34	-38	-42	-44	-46	-48	-51	-55	-58	-60	-62	-64
50	-35	-39	-43	-45	-47	-49	-53	-56	-59	-61	-63	-65
55	-36	-40	-44	-46	-48	-50	-54	-57	-60	-62	-64	-66
60	-38	-41	-45	-47	-49	-51	-55	-58	-61	-63	-65	-67

Spells

Any spell that generates heat will reduce hits lost from cold damage (most are treated as a small fire). Most spells list the temperatures that they are good against. *Cold Resistance True* spells will negate all damage from cold down to -50 degrees (colder than that and all damage is halved). Spells that change the environment can also modify the damage taken from the cold.

Clothing

Characters are assumed to be wearing normal winter clothing (heavy clothes, cloaks, gloves, and boots). If the characters are wearing "non-winter" clothing, double all hits taken from cold damage. If the characters supplement their normal clothing with furred animal-skin cloaks, hoods, masks, boots, and gloves; their cold loss will be normal. Exceptionally made clothing (clothing made specifically to battle artic temperatures), heat, or shelter can only reduce cold damage by half (at a maximum). However, two of the three above protections can provide 100% protection from the cold.

19.7.3 MOVEMENT

Travelling on foot through the snow or ice halves normal movement. In addition, the following tips should be observed in artic conditions.

Directions—You should know the direction in which you were originally travelling and the location of your final destination. Use constellations and landmarks as often as possible to determine direction.

Thin Ice—When you must cross thin ice, take off all armor, lie flat, and slither on your stomach (this will distribute your weight evenly). While moving like this, movement is divided by 5.

Skis—Skis are the fastest and most energy-saving way to travel, but they are nearly useless in deep or loose snow (and are almost impossible to make without the proper tools or magic). While moving on skis, make moving maneuvers and modify your normal movement rate accordingly (and only spend half the normal exhaustion while skiing). Use a Medium maneuver in normal conditions; Sheer Folly in deep/loose snow.

Snowshoes—Snowshoes are the best mode of transportation in deep or loose snow; but they tend to be slow and exhausting. Snowshoes can be made from animal ribs, sticks or green willow branches. Thin rope, leather straps, or gut can be used to lash the snowshoe frame together. While moving with snow shoes, subtract 10 from your normal pace (and double normal exhaustion point expenditure).

Skates—Skating is the fastest self-propelled mode of transportation on the ice. However, a character must have the Skating skill in order to use skates. While moving on skates, add 15 to your normal movement rate (and spend exhaustion as normal).

19.7.4 COMBAT

All melee combat on ice suffers a -10 penalty. In addition, a character must make a moving maneuver roll in every combat round that the character takes damage or when the character "misses" a physical attack (i.e., delivers zero concussion hits and no critical). In addition, when you receive a critical, the moving maneuver roll is modified by -5 per severity of the critical (e.g., an 'A' critical gives a -5 modification, a 'D' critical gives a -20 modification).

In addition, all DBs suffer a -5 penalty while on snow (-10 in deep snow). Whenever you receive a critical, you must make a moving maneuver roll as described under the ice rules above.

Do not forget to apply penalties to DB for all the heavy clothing. With normal winter gear, all DBs suffer a -10. With special gear, this penalty can be lowered or raised by another 5.



19.7.5 CLOTHING

Heavy clothing and low temperatures have effects other than hit loss (and exhaustion).

Animal Hides—If animal hide cloaks are worn, treat the AT as 7 (if this is higher than the character's normal AT). However, all such adorned characters have a -5 penalty to moving maneuvers and Quickness bonus. If characters are bundled exceptional well (i.e., they are taking only half damage due to cold), they will suffer a -20 penalty. Quickness stat bonus can not be lowered below zero.

Spell Casting—All spells cast must make a Spell Casting Static Maneuver roll (i.e., no spell is "automatic"). In addition, The Free Hands modifier suffers an additional penalty of -5.

Layered Clothes—Clothing should be worn in layers. The outer layers should be made of a water- and windproof hide.

Restricting Clothes—Clothing that is restricting (i.e., tight as opposed to bundled) causes the body to lose heat rapidly. If characters are wearing tight clothing, they will taken an additional 6 hits of cold damage per hour due to heat loss.

Sweat—If you start to sweat, loosen your clothing (open your collar, wrists, or front) to allow the moisture to evaporate. Sweat is dangerous, due to the fact it reduces the effectiveness of clothing.

Hands and Feet—Your life may depend on your ability to use your feet and hands. Keep your hands and feet covered and as dry as possible. Feet and hands can be kept warms by putting them under the armpits, between the thighs, or against the ribs. To make sure your feet stay comfortable, wear boots that are a size too big (by about 5%), so you can wear at least two pairs of socks. Placing grass, moss, or feathers between two pairs of socks will help keep your feet warms and dry.

Covering—Always keep your head and face covered. A good deal of your body heat is lost through the head. Heat loss due to exposure of the head and face causes double damage.

Making Clothing

Hooded cloaks take about 1 hour to make (assuming a successful Crafting maneuver). The hood must cover the character's face and head. Gloves and boots take about two hours to make (assuming a successful Crafting maneuver). Neglecting any of the aforementioned items results in an additional 6 hits per hour of cold damage (for each item). If characters leave any areas exposed for 10 minutes, the exposed area will become numb. Animal fat that is spread over exposed areas (one use per area) will protect that area as if it were covered (though the effects only last 2 hours).

19.7.6 FUEL

Many different types of fuel are available in the far north: animal blubber, birch bark, lichens, coal, dried grass, and driftwood. In certain areas of the arctic, however, the only fuel will be animal fat. Five pounds of blubber will burn for several hours (and the left over blubber is edible).

Some arctic natives burn blubber using seal bones as a wick. They start by making a small pyramid pile of bones; then they soak a small rag with blubber oil, light the rag, place it inside the bone pile, and carefully lay the blubber on top of the bone pile. The flames render the oil from the piece of blubber, and the oil dips onto the heated bones, which starts a fire.

A blubber oven can be made from a pot helm. First, punch holes in the helm. Build a wick from a piece of canvas, dry tundra moss, or a piece of sealskin (with the hair side up). Soak the wick in oil, light it, and place it under the helm. Then, as the helm heats up, place the blubber on top of the helm. The blubber oil dripping into the heated air in the helm will burn hotter than it does when the blubber is placed directly on a wick without a helm.

19.7.7 SHELTER TYPES

There are two types of shelters: natural and man-made. Natural shelters range from caves and crevices, to overhanging rocks, etc. Man-made shelters should be kept small so that the heat inside lasts longer. To insure good heat ventilation, make sure that the shelter is windproof. There must always be a way for fresh air to get into the shelter (to prevent gas poisoning). This is accomplished by leaving a small crack near the bottom of the shelter to allow fresh air to enter, and by leaving a small crack in or near the ceiling to allow stale air to escape.

One of the simplest shelters to build is a hollowed out, hard-packed snowdrift. Even a hole in the snow will provide temporary shelter. If the surface you are on is packed ice or rock, build up the ice, snow, rocks (or whatever) to form a shelter. Building up is sometimes easier than digging in.

If you are building a shelter of ice or snow blocks, the cracks between the blocks can be stuffed with triangular pieces of snow and finished off with light snow rubbed into the remaining space. The snow functions as a binder and will become stronger than the original snow blocks.

A snow covering for a cave entrance takes almost an hour to build (and requires a successful Survival-Snow maneuver). A simple ice hut takes about an hour an a half to build. A hollowed out space around a tree trunk (using the tree as partial shelter) takes about an hour.

19.7.8 ARCTIC AILMENTS

This section tells everything you need to know about the listed ailments. Please note that if the proper spells are available, he should heal the character, for divine healing is much quicker than natural healing. The same applies to herbal healing (but beware of herbal addictions).

Frostbite

Exposure to extreme cold for long periods of time may cause frostbite. Symptoms of frostbite are coldness in the affected skin, followed by numbness. The frostbitten area is red at first, then pale or waxy white. Sometimes there is no pain in frostbitten skin. Therefore, you may be unaware of having frostbite.

If you loose more than 50% of your total hits to cold damage, you must make an RR versus a 10th level disease. If successful, all cold damage taken is halved. This is because your body attempts to cool itself to fight off the cold.

For every 40 hits of cold damage sustained, any exposed body parts will become frostbitten. For each area that becomes frostbitten, a character will lose d10 Co and there is a 25% chance that the area will become gangrenous. If the frostbitten area is not attended to in two days, it will automatically become gangrenous and have to be amputated (if not amputated the gangrene will begin to spread to adjacent body parts).

For non-magical treatment of frostbite, follow these rules.

1) Remove wet or tight clothing from the frostbitten area. Do not forcibly remove frozen boots or clothing.
2) Place the frostbitten areas against the warmest body parts (the chest, inner thighs, and armpits).
3) If possible, thaw the frozen areas in warm water
4) Do not apply snow or ice to the area. This will worsen the frostbite.
5) Keep the frostbitten area as immobile as possible; do exercise or massage the frozen area.
6) Frostbite may cause blistering and peeling, just like a sunburn. Do not break or open the blisters. If a character has blisters, he will be at -10 on all activities. If a character has blisters that are broken open, he will be at -20 on all activities.
7) Check the affect skin often.

If all the above steps are followed, the affected character will not become gangrenous. However, for each one of the steps omitted, there is a cumulative 5% chance of becoming gangrenous.

Frostbite will affect the character as follows.

Face—A -25 penalty on all Awareness skills. In addition, the character suffers -2d10 to Appearance.

Hands—A -10 penalty on all skills requiring hands. After making an attack that delivers a critical, there is a 20% chance that the character will drop his weapon.

Feet—A -2d10 modification to Qu and Ag bonuses. All maneuver rolls made from a standing position have the difficulty increased by two.

Frost/Burn Relief will temporarily remove the effects of frostbite (for 1 hour per level of caster), but the cold damage must be healed before the effects are permanently removed.

Trench foot

Trench foot is caused by exposure to cold and wet. The condition gets worse when the feet are kept still or left in tight boots. Symptoms of trench foot include: clumsiness in walking, tingling and aching, and redness and swelling of the feet. Trench foot can be prevented by avoiding inactivity of the feet and keeping them warm and dry. Treat trench foot as you would frostbite (see above). Characters affected by trench foot subtract 20 from their movement rate and have a -20 penalty on all moving maneuver rolls. Any magical healing will remove trench foot.

GAMEMASTER LAW

Mortal Cold (Hypothermia):

Mortal cold occurs when the body loses more heat than it produces. If a character is not moving, Mortal Cold will set in if the character takes more than 20 hits of cold damage in an hour. If a character is moving, he will only suffer Mortal Cold if he takes more than 50% of his hits in one hour.

The symptoms of Mortal Cold are: uncontrollable shivering, difficulty with speech and thinking, and blue puffy skin. When Mortal Cold strikes it can be fatal. Act immediately. Run and jump around and move the body and limbs around to create body heat. Have the character drink any hot liquid available, and go to the nearest shelter or fire as quickly as possible. If under the affects of *Haste* or *Speed*, a character will be able to survive for one extra minute per point of his temporary Constitution stat.

Snow Blindness

Snow blindness is caused by glare from the snow. It can occur even on foggy or cloudy days. The first symptom is noticeable when ground contours cannot be differentiated; this is followed by burning in the eyes. Later, the eyes will hurt when subjected to any light. Being snow blind gives you a -10 to OB and DB.

If stricken by snow blindness, stay in complete darkness until your eyes are back to normal. Wearing a piece of wood, leather or other material with narrow eye slits cut in it at all times will protect against snow blindness. Glare can also be reduced by blackening your nose and cheeks with soot.

Bleeding

Blood thins in cold weather and takes longer to clot. Because blood creates warmth throughout the body, blood loss can become critical. All bleeding wounds (wounds that result in hits per round) are doubled (e.g., a 1/round wound becomes 2/round, etc.). First aid maneuvers are increased by two in difficulty. If possible, keep the body and limbs comfortably warm. If bleeding continues, raise the bleeding area and apply pressure to the wound. As a last resort (for severe bleeding from an arm or leg), apply a tourniquet immediately. Once applied, the tourniquet must be left on, despite the possibility or losing the limb.

Getting Wet

When a character is immersed into Arctic waters, he takes 2d10 hits from the cold water for every round he is in the water. In addition, he must make an RR versus a 5th level attack (using triple Co stat bonus as the modifier). If the RR is failed, the character has slipped into shock (may take no actions) until all damage from cold is healed.

In addition, when the character exits the water he will take 2d10 of damage for every 25% of his body that was in the water. This damage will be taken every round until the character dries. To dry, the character must remove his wet clothing (taking approximately 6 rounds for normal arctic clothing). This makes water an effective weapon (two pints of water will wet 25% of a human-sized body).

Hygiene

In the arctic, cleanliness is important. If body washing is not possible, try to keep the face, hands, armpits, groin area, and feet clean. If these body parts are not kept clean, subtract d10 from Appearance and all Influence skills suffer a -10 (this loss occurs each week that the areas are not cleaned). After a week of "uncleanliness," the character must make an RR versus a 1st level disease. Each week thereafter, the level of the RR increases by 1 (until the character is "cleaned").

Every night, before going to sleep, remove your boots and dry, rub, and massage your feet. Do not sleep in wet socks, put them next to your body to dry. If you have no fire and your boots are wet, stuff the boots with dry grass or moss to help them dry more quickly. Do not be afraid to expose your body when ridding it of body wastes. The exposed areas will not be exposed long enough to hurt you (and will generally be blood-filled and warmer anyway). Bury your garbage and body wastes far from your shelter and water supply.

Sunburn

Getting artic sunburn is possible on both cloudy and sunny days, and should be considered dangerous. Every hour that you have exposed skin, an RR versus disease must be made (level determined by the GM; normally a level 3 attack). Success indicates avoidance of sunburn. Failure indicates that a character has gained a sunburn. Animal fat rubbed on the skin helps to prevent sunburn (+10 on the RR). Also a stubby beard will protect your face against sunburn (+10 on the RR).

If sunburned, keep the affected area moist with animal oils and stay out of the sun. Sunburned characters will suffer a -5 to -25 on all activities (the GM should vary the penalty based upon how badly the RR was failed).

Gas Poisoning

Gas poisoning is also a great hazard in the artic. To someone subjected to extreme cold, the desire to get warm and stay warm often overrides common sense.

In temporary shelters, only use fires for cooking. Any type of fire in a poorly ventilated shelter can produce a dangerous amount of odorless gas. To get rid of smoke and poisonous gasses created by fires, leave the top of the shelter open and make another opening (for fresh air) close to the ground.

If you are in a shelter and begin to feel drowsy, get some fresh air. If your party is sleeping in a closed, heated shelter, one man should stay on watch for indications of gas vapors. A yellow flame on the fire indicates the presence of gas.

If a person is overcome by gas poisoning, he must make a poison RR (level determined by the GM; normally 10th level) or pass out for 10d10 minutes. For every half hour exposed to the gas, another RR must be made and the level of the RR increases by a d10.

Water and Other Liquids

Supplies will freeze as easily as characters do. Carry liquids close to the body will prevent them from freezing. Oil in flasks will not freeze, but other liquids will freeze and burst their containers after prolonged exposure to cold.

Water can be obtained by cutting a hole in the ice or by melting ice. Approximately 50% more fuel and time are required to obtain a given amount of water from snow than from ice.

Snow can be eaten, but if you eat snow follow these rules.

1) Allow the snow to thaw enough to be molded into a long stick or ball. Do not eat snow in its natural state. It will cause a weakening sickness instead of relieving thirst (make an RR versus a 5th level disease or loose d10 from temporary Strength).
2) Do not eat crushed ice. It may cause injury to your lips and tongue.
3) If you are hot, cold, or tired, eating snow will chill your body (causing d10 cold damage).
4) The milky water from a glacial stream can only be consumed after it has been allowed to sit for approximately five hours (because of the impurities). All water, with no exceptions should be boiled. There is a 10% chance that any water found in the artic (that is not boiled before imbibed) will cause the drinker to make a poison RR (level 10). Failure results in incapacitation for 20d10 minutes and a loss of d10 to temporary St.
5) Any surface that is heated by the sun's light can be used to melt ice and snow (like a flat rock or dark water-proof hide).
6) Don't eat discolored snow.

19.7.9 FOOD

Your chances of finding food in the artic depend on the time of the year and your location. Artic shores are normally clear of all animals and plants, but even north of the timberline, where mice, fish, and grubs are not readily available, you can find enough food to stay alive.



Storing and Preserving Meat

If a large animal is killed or an abundance of smaller game is found, you should store or preserve some of the meat for future use. Freeze the meat as quickly as possible. During the summer months, meat and game should be kept in a cool shady place. A hole in the ground will work nicely.

Cure meat by hanging it in strips in trees where the wind and sun can reach it. Meat should be hung at least 15' from the ground to be out of the range of most flies. In some areas, it may be necessary to protect your supplies from scavengers like bears or wolverines. This can be done by hanging your supplies at least 15 feet from the ground.

Fish

All coastal waters are rich in sea life. There is little poisonous seafood in artic waters (though this may vary from game world to game world). Fish can be caught by hand, hooked, netted, speared, or stunned by a rock or club. Cod will swim up to investigate strips of cloth or bits of metal or bone, and may also be caught through a hole in the ice.

Land and Sea Mammals

There are some tricks to hunting animals in the arctic environs.

Caribou—Caribou may be very curious. There is a 5% chance of coaxing them close to you by waving a piece of cloth and crawling slowly toward them.

Wolves—There is a 10% chance of bringing a wolf to you by imitating a four-legged animal.

Mountain Goats/Sheep—Mountain goats and sheep are wary and hard to get close to. However, they can be surprised more easily by getting above them and moving quietly downwind while they are feeding.

Bears—Bears are normally bad-tempered and dangerous. A wounded bear should not be followed into cover. The polar bear is a tireless, clever hunter with good sight and an extraordinary sense of smell.

Rabbits—Rabbits often run in circles and return to the place where they were scared. If a rabbit is running, whistle. There is a 10% chance that it will stop. Snares are efficient for catching small land game.

Seals/Walruses/Polar Bears—During the winter and spring, seals, walruses, and polar bears found on ice floes in open water.

Seals—Seals should be stalked with care. Keep downwind of them and avoid sudden movements. If a seal appears to move, stand up quickly and shout. There is a 20% chance that the seal will become frightened and lie still (allowing you to spear it). Seals rest on ice floes and are found in large numbers where the ice is broken by current holes and tidewater cracks.

Walruses—Walruses are usually approachable by water only. However, they are the most dangerous animals in the artic and should be avoided.

19.7.10 ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

In most regions of the world, weather conditions can cause great inconvenience. In the arctic, weather can kill.

Blizzards

Blizzards are common in the artic and often form giant snowdrifts that can bury a man in a very short time. If at all possible, stay under cover during blizzards. Pay careful attention to weather conditions at all times. There is a basic 10% chance per day that a blizzard will occur.

Snowfields and Glaciers

The quickest way to get down a steep snowfield is to slide down on you feet, using a stick about 5' long as a brace, digging into the snow to stop from falling. The staff may also be used to check for crevasses.

Crevasses are generally found on glaciers at right angles to the direction of glacier flow. It is usually possible to travel around them (since they seldom ever run completely across the glacier).

Avalanches

If you get caught in an avalanche, try to keep your head above the surface of the snow. An avalanche is like a snow river and swimming strokes will keep you on the surface. Move around in a horizontal position. If you are completely covered by snow, create an air pocket around your head by placing your hands on top of your head. This will leave room in which you can maneuver. There is a base 5% per day chance of an avalanche occurring (in appropriate areas).

Floes, Slush, and Melting Ice

Arctic spring brings the hazard of melting ice and breakups. Attention, concentration, slow movement, and common sense will help you avoid these hazards. If you fall through the ice, spread your arms out immediately. It is difficult to climb back onto the ice (Very Hard difficulty), but not impossible. Using your arms and legs for leverage, attempt to roll out of the water. If the ice continues to break, work your way towards shore or firmer ice.

Icebergs

Icebergs, which are constantly in the process of melting, melt faster below the water's surface. Icebergs become top-heavy and fall over. Avoid pointed icebergs. For shelter at sea, seek out low, flat-topped icebergs.

Whiteout

Whiteout is caused by overcast skies against snow-covered ground. This makes it difficult to judge distance and nature of the terrain. All creatures caught in a whiteout are blinded for ten minutes (unless exceptional vision abilities are natural in the creature). Unsheltered characters can only see 2 feet in all directions.

Cold Water

When submerged in icy water, get out as quickly as possible. Icy water drains hits very quickly. In all cold-weather situations, pay particular attention to protecting your hands, feet, head, ears, and nose. Half your body heat can be lost through these areas of the body.

ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

A-1.1 PERSONAL CHANNEL

One thing that will set apart a mediocre GM from a great GM is his ability to interface with his players. The relationship between the GM and his individual players (as opposed to the players as a collective unit) is called the GM's personal channel.

By developing a personal channel with each and every player, a GM learns exactly what kinds of stimulus drives a player. He learns phrases and terminology that the player understands and reacts well to. Common frames of reference are developed. By developing this relationship, the player reacts more realistically to story (because the GM can present the story in a way that is exciting to the player).

In addition, by developing a personal channel, the player becomes comfortable talking and interacting with the GM. This is important because one of the key features needed to keep energy in a game is player feedback. With a good personal channel, the player will not be timid in approaching the GM with questions about the story.

There are many ways that a GM develops a personal channel with a player. The first (and simplest) way is to have it exist because the GM and player are already close friends. These kinds of personal channels are very deep and can provide very rewarding experiences in the game.

Another common way to develop this relationship is to spend time with the player outside of the game. Go to lunch together. Go to the movies. Take the time (and the effort) to become friends.

Finally, a popular way to start developing the personal channel is to run the player through solo sessions (where it is only that one player and the GM). While this take a lot of time, it is very rewarding as the GM discovers what motivates the player and the player learns what to expect from the GM.

Solo Sessions

Solo sessions will be necessary to fine-tune every personal channel. Do not assume that just because you are already good friends that you do not need to work with a player individually. Working with a player individually is the best way to get the player motivated and full of energy for your game.

As a word of caution, do not try and do this with other players just sitting around the gaming table. Schedule a time for each player to play; and have no other players there. No pressure; no distractions.

Good Character Story

One of the things that distinguishes a great GM are his players and their enthusiasm for the game. This often makes the difference between a really fun game and a game that is full of emotion and driven by the passions of the players. How do you get players motivated like this: a good character story.

Character stories are the little things that drive the character to action in the game. The best character stories are developed by playing characters one-on-one for a while (perhaps before the game really begins). If you take the time to run each player individually, giving him a good character story, you will be rewarded when the whole group comes together (as you will have a group of people, each driven by some goal that he feels strongly about).

Design your stories (and sessions) so that each player has the opportunity to pursue a little bit of his character story. If you set up a good character story and then never allow the player to pursue it, you have failed to capture the emotional energy that the player could add to your game.

For example, a character who had his sister slain by barbarians may become very emotional about his revenge and his love for his sister. If you give the player this background and then never have barbarians show up, you will have failed to capitalize on potential energy.

A-1.2 ROLE CRAFTING

GMs who put forth an effort to understand their players' motivations and desires have more fulfilling games. But there is another side to that observation. The players must also understand that for the maximum effect, they must conform to the GM's story. This is most important when the GM is setting the stage for the game to begin—when characters are being developed. The GM should understand the art of crafting a role for the character. Role crafting will consist of three basic steps: casting the role, constructing the character background, and creating the micro-story.

Note that the character's role should not be confused with the character's persona. A role is a function or duty. A persona is a list of traits that define a character. A character's role might be the heir to the duchy. A character's persona might include the fact that he is a warrior driven by guilt. As you can see, a persona is simply a character in relation to himself. A role is very closely tied to the environment that the character exists within.

A-1.2.1 GOALS OF ROLE PLAYING

Before we can examine the intricate nature of crafting roles, we should re-examine the goals of role playing.

One of the goals of role playing is to adopt a new persona and bringing that persona to life, interacting with an interesting story. Thus, it would seem that they are two steps in accomplishing this goal, creating the persona and bringing that persona to life.

A large part of creating the persona is based around mechanics (though this varies from system to system). This may imply that there are only mechanics to deal with when creating the persona, but do not be fooled. There are many tricks of mechanics that can be utilized to mold the persona properly.

The second step, bringing that character to life has been largely addressed in other sections of this book. However, it should be emphasized that a properly created character will be easier to bring to life. In addition, this kind of character will be driven by realistic reactions and emotions within the game.

How Different?

The big question when creating a character is: How much like myself do I want my character to be? The answer to this question will vary from player to player, but the ramifications of the question are very significant.

The first approach to answering the question above is preceded by an observation: this is make-believe, so play something very different from the way real life is. Many people enjoy exploring different aspects of personality traits through the characters they play in the game (e.g., what would it be like to be mean and viscious, or can I gain power through a passive personality, etc.). This is a perfectly fine approach, but there is one drawback... realistic responses are harder to create. This can result in stereotypes, though sometimes a player becomes very good at creating realistic responses.

The other approach to answering the question above is preceded by a different observation: to create realistic emotion and reactions, play something realistic. While this creates realistic situtations in the game, the player often becomes disgruntled by bad situations in the game (e.g., life is bad enough, but my character is doing poorly in the game!). This means that the GM has to create stories that are not going to compromise the player's feelings about the game.

A-1.2.2 CASTING THE ROLE

Casting the role is the actual process by which the player expresses his desire to play and the GM helps him define the character he wants to play. It should be understood that the GM has to be careful not to just let the player create any type of character for the game. He must maintain some control over the character creation. After all, only the GM knows the types of stories and plots he has in mind. If the player is going to play a character that is completely incompatible with the stories, neither the GM or the player will be happy.

Unlike movie casting, the roles are rarely "pre-defined;" instead, the role is defined as it is being cast (by both the GM and player). At this stage, feel free to negotiate with the player. Each of you should compromise your positions, so that a good middle ground is reached. Asking the right questions is a must. The GM must understand the type of stories he will run and then direct the negotiations appropriately.

A-1.2.3 CREATING THE CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Creating a good character background is a job that should not be left to the whims of the players. While the players can submit some background ideas for their character (and probably will), the GM should be the one to actually mold the character background.

When the GM molds the character background, he can build in specific story hooks and links. He can also set up multiple micro stories (see below) that can provide energy for the game. To accomplish all of these goals, there are several techniques that are desirable to master.

Molding the Mechanics

Whatever role playing system you are using, do not use it all! You should always consider your world setting before embracing everything in a system. For example, in a given campaign setting, all wizards have been killed by some kind of mysterious plague. By making this kind of statement, the GM has decreed that magic use will be severely limited in his game. It might be possible for a player to play a spell using profession, but he will understand the limitations put upon him.

Hopefully, the net result will be that the players do not describe their character as a "dwarven fighter," but as "the third descendant of Danic Onyxhands, captain of the 5th Free Dwarven Militia." Players should begin to not think of their characters in terms of the mechanics, but in terms of who they are within the world.

Another aspect to consider in the mechanics of a system is the way that the character's "skills" are represented within the game. Most importantly, what do you do when a character's skills are vastly different than the player's skills. As a guideline, GMs should direct a player towards skills that he (the player) already possesses. This will allow the player to have his "moments" in the spotlight. As a case in point, consider a player who wants to play an outdoorsman/hunter type of character. If that player knows very little about the outdoors or hunting, it will be hard for him to step forward with good ideas and plans. However, if the player is also an outdoorsman and hunts as a hobby, he will be able to provide extra energy in any scenes where he is in his element.

Finally, a GM should make sure that there is an adequate amount of specialized skills in the game that are necessary for the story. For example, if the story is going to require the characters to travel around and act as diplomats, he should make sure that the characters develop skills in that area. Alternatively, if the characters are expected to go and kill a nasty troll up in the mountains, at least one of them should have knowledge about trolls and some of them (if not all of them) should be combat ready!

Playing the Background

One technqiue that is quite effective in getting a player to understand his character is to play through specific scenes in the character's background. This should not be viewed as a normal gaming session. The reason is that the outcome is generally predetermined.

The GM must manage the player's expectations of this session (or sessions), so that he knows that certain things must happen. Hopefully, you have structured the story such that there are several paths that lead to the same conclusion. This way, the character can still have some choices, but the outcome is still the same. For example, if the character's home city is destroyed, he may not be able to save the city; but perhaps he can rescue one of his relatives and/or a family heirloom. This will make that relative or heirloom that much more special for the player (and therefore his character).

The net result is that the player is more "connected" with his character. He will feel emotions that the character should feel. He will react as the character would react. All of this, before the first actual session!



Hooks and Links

Hooks and links are elements built into the character background. Hooks are used used to invoke energy into the game; links are used to inspire interaction between players.

A hook is a connection between the character and the story. The GM should be sure that there are several hooks built into the character background so that the player can "connect" with the story at hand. Hopefully, the hooks are spread out and will provide connections to several stories within the campaign (though the GM must think quite a bit ahead to do this well).

A link is a connection between one character and another. Every character should have at least one (and maybe two or three) links built into the character's background. This will allow the player to "connect" with other players (and this has a profound effect on role playing).

It should be noted that while it is possible to build a hook with only vague ideas of the connection (e.g., the character's brother was killed by someone seven years ago—the GM does not have to define who the killer is when the hook is created), a link must be defined more fully. This usually requires a good idea of who all the characters are in the game, so you can link them in some coherent fashion. In turn, this means that you should probably wait to finalize all character backgrounds until you have a firm idea of which player is playing which character.

Prompting

Regardless of how well you set-up a character and his background, there will be times that player forgets something. Hopefully, this will never occur at a critical junction. If it does, you must remember to rule in favor of the player. The player is not the character and should not be expected to remember everything at all times. There will be times that you will have to prompt the player to remember.

If you detect that a player is forgetting something, drop a hint. Do not be obvious. The degree of subtlty must be tailored to fit the player receiving the prompt (some players pick up on the hints easier than others). For example, if one character discovers that the Duke is going to be visiting the docks tomorrow morning and the player forgets to mention it; have a bunch of sailors come in talking about the fancy preparations going on at the docks.

A-1.2.4 CREATING THE MICRO STORY

The character story (micro story) is a great element for a GM to use in enhancing his game. By creating small little stories for each character, the players all feel like they have something special to add to the game.

The GM should overlap aspects of micro stories so that when all put together reveal a larger more complex story. For example, a knight character might know of two kingdoms who refuse to make peace. They each hold half of an old crown and believe each is the rightful heir to the artifact. A wizard might know that when the pieces are joined, there are prophecies that will come to pass and great events will be set in motion (not to mention the magical abilities that will be activated).

A-1.2.5 FLAGS OF DISBELIEF

A flag of disbelief is anything that causes a player to realize that the story is not "real." A GM should constantly be aware of the little things that raise flags of disbelief. The goal is to minimize the number of such flags so the jarring effect of reality intruding upon the game is minimal.

Some examples of common things that raise flags of disbelief include character names. You should have a firm grasp of the linguistics of the cultures and what constitutes a "normal" name. For example, if you have a culture based upon the Romans (and most people have names like Marcus or Aurelius), do not allow a character to have a name like Tarara Goondiay. While this might provide some humorous moments in the game, there will be thousands of flags of disbelief throughout the life of the game (everytime someone says the character's name).

A-1.3 USING MUSIC

While this was discussed briefly in the section on presentation, it is mentioned again here because there are some advanced techniques that can be developed with music during the session.

During the session, there are basically two kinds of music that you will want to use: background and foreground. Each kind should be used differently and requires different set-up preparations.

Background music is easy to prepare. Simply find the music you want and have it playing (low) in the background during the session. If you have the option of turning the music to "repeat" when complete, you should make it so, as the absence of music can be distracting when you have been using it as a backdrop. Simply let the music run until the scene is complete. You should divide your session into discreet scenes (with good "breaks") so that you can plan your background music by scene. For example, you may have one set of music for the sea voyage the character's are about to embark upon and a different set for when the character's find that the city they are travelling to has been burned to the ground.

Foreground music is much more difficult to master. This type of music is generally used in conjunction with a monologue or descriptive element that the GM must deliver. This is important, as the pacing of the delivery should be timed to coincide with the inflections of the music. When using forground music, turn up the volume and let the music assist in building the emotion of the scene. For example, you can plan on playing a particular piece of music during the solilioquy of a general to the players. Or when you are describing a fierce storm that it just about to sink the players' ship, you can pace the descriptions to coincide with the crescendos of the music. Warning, this is something is difficult to master. You must be careful to not "distract" from the story by using music. When used this way, music should enhance the emotion, not create a diversion.

There is one other technique that can be utilized with music: sound masking. If you have music playing (as background), you can lean over and speak to one of the players in low tones without too much fear of the other players hearing what you are saying (and if you are afraid of such, just turn up the volume a little). However, if you use such a technique, you should be sure to "lean-in" on non-important moments (lest the players learn that every time you lean-in something important is about to happen).

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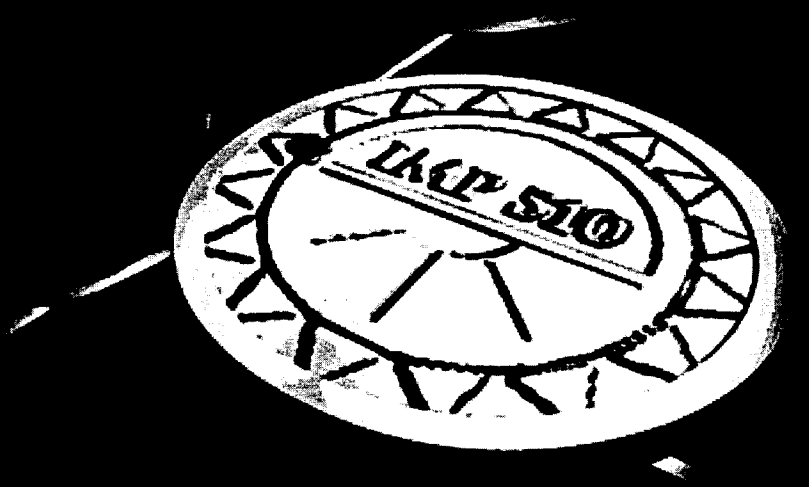
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